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*Here's a Hand*

*Wallace Bruce*







Mr George Dobie  
with the compliments of  
the Author

Walter Bunn

Edinburgh

July 14, 1893.



**Here's a Hand**



5

**Here's a Hand**

*" And here's a hand, my trusty fier,  
And gie's a hand o' thine."*

# Here's a Hand

BY

WALLACE BRUCE

AUTHOR OF

'IN CLOVER AND HEATHER,' 'THE LAND OF BURNS,' ETC.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

MDCCCXCIII

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*Dear Scotia! evermore more dear  
To loyal sons in every land;  
Strong in a race that knew not fear,  
And for man's freedom dared to stand:  
Ay, dearer for thy songs that float  
Like thistle-down o'er land and sea,  
And strike the universal note  
Of love, and faith, and liberty.*

—IN CLOVER AND HEATHER.

I HAVE gathered these Addresses, Lectures, and Poems on Scottish subjects together in a little volume, to meet the wishes of friends who requested it; and I have complied the more willingly, as they convey in brief compass, to those who welcome them, my love for Burns, Scott, and Scotland.

WALLACE BRUCE.

EDINBURGH, *May* 15, 1893.



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Robert Burns  
His Genius and Poetry

*On my first trip to Scotland I made loving pilgrimages to the shrines of Robert Burns and Walter Scott. Returning to America, I voiced my love for these great Scottish writers in almost every town and city from New York to San Francisco; in open-air assemblies, by the side of clear lakes and bright-flowing rivers, from Minnesota to Florida; and I have brought them back to the old Homestead, to the lecture platforms of Ayr, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Kilmarnock, and Stirling, "nane the waur," I trust, for their long journeying.*



ABOUT two miles from the burgh of Ayr, on the great road leading from its main street to the "Auld Brig o' Doon," stands a cottage, clay-built and white-washed, with a thatched roof almost touching the lintel of the doorway. There are many of these plain, one-storey dwellings scattered over Scotland from Gretna Green to John o' Groat's,—all having a family resemblance of poverty, but few plainer than this, which bears on the left-

hand door-post a little sign-board  
with these words :—

ROBERT BURNS,  
THE AYRSHIRE POET,  
was born under this roof on the  
25th of January 1759.  
Died the 21st of July 1796.

One hundred and thirty-five years ago the father of the poet built this house with his own hands, little thinking that his rude masonry would become a temple of the muses ; and, surely, the stately lords and nobles of Carrick and Kyle and Cunningham—ancient families dwelling in the castles of their ancestors—would have smiled had it been foretold to them that this humble shelter would be the shrine of their nation, and a spot known and loved

by the world ; that, when they were in their graves, and their rank and their titles forgotten, it would be the central point of interest in a national, or, if I may so call it, an international celebration—the centennial of the great genius of their country ; more than this, that Scotland, the northern land of poetry and the nurse of arms,—than which no nation has a truer romance, a sweeter poetry, or a brighter history, both in civil and in religious liberty,—should be rebaptised in the light of that genius, radiating from that little cottage, until she should be known the world over as the “Land of Burns.”

A whole people delight in this homage, and many are the testimonials to his memory : monuments and statues in street, garden, and art

building; the careful guardianship of everything his hand has touched; translations of his songs into so many different languages, and, flowing from still deeper veneration, personal tributes which indicate more clearly the place he occupies in the heart of mankind.

Scarcely a day passes without bringing some token of affection; and, when I met one summer evening in 1870, on the banks of the Doon, a gentleman from San Francisco, who had received from the hands of the ladies of that city a wreath of flowers to place upon his grave, I felt more than ever before how universal was the love for the peasant poet, and a certain pride that, humble as it was, it was not only an offering from my own

country, but also that a few weak colonies, sent like Ishmael into the wilderness, in less than a century after their existence as a nation—ay, before the celebration of their centennial birthday—had stretched an arm of iron and steel across a continent, and, picking a flower on its sunset slope, placed it in fifteen days, before its fragrance had departed, upon his grave at Dumfries. I wished then that I could bring back a leaf from the banks of that stream, made immortal in song, which, like the singing leaves of Arabian story, might reveal the secret of his genius and the analysis of his power.

What, then, are the qualities which, shining out through his poetry, interest all classes, and give him



readers from every rank and condition of life? You will remember that our Uncle Toby, one evening, was counting over to himself on his finger - ends, beginning with his thumb, the various perfections of Mrs Wadman; and, finally getting somewhat puzzled, he asks Corporal Trim to bring him pen and paper, remarking: "She has a thousand virtues, but that which wins me most, and, which is a security for all the rest, is the compassionate turn and the singular humanity of her character." The word which the Corporal wrote at the very top and left-hand corner of the page, as if to leave room for the remaining nine hundred and ninety - nine, we take as the prominent point of his character—humanity; for, more than

any other poet save Shakespeare, Burns knew at once the strength and weakness of the passions of mankind. His poetry, therefore, is not an artificial composition, woven by the piece and sold by the yard, full of calico - stamped flowers, warranted to wash at the hands of critics ; but the blood flows in his ideas ; you feel their warmth ; he takes all men by the hand, and calls them brothers. Misfortune finds in him the purest sympathy, poverty receives a cordial and neighbourly respect ; manhood, in its truest sense, is everywhere recognised, and there is no outcast from society so fallen, but hope is found in these lines, which did for Scotland what Hood's "Bridge of Sighs" did for England—lines embodying the true

cardinal virtue, charity, a word which should be "graven with an iron pen and lead into the rock for ever" :—

"Then gently scan your brother man,  
Still gentler sister woman ;  
Though they may gang a kennin wrang,  
To step aside is human :  
One point must still be greatly dark,  
The moving *Why* they do it ;  
And just as lamely can ye mark  
How far perhaps they rue it.

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone  
Decidedly can try us ;  
He knows each chord, its various tone,  
Each spring, its various bias :  
Then at the balance let's be mute,  
We never can adjust it ;  
What's done we partly can compute,  
But know not what's resisted."

So all the way from the lowest  
misfortune, through the grades of  
human life, up to the very heart of  
poets who seem to walk alone in the

light of inspiration, this great power, humanity, is felt and recognised. Burns might indeed be well styled the poet's poet, for the greater the advance in poetic taste or appreciation the higher the reverence for his genius. One thing at least is certain, no other name has ever united the poets of any age or century in expressions of sympathy, veneration, and respect. Each emulates the other in bringing the sweet flowers of poesy to his tomb. Wordsworth, you remember, weeps a poem at his grave. Campbell writes verses to his memory, sweet as his "Exile of Erin." The Ettrick Shepherd sings with unfeigned grief—

"There's nae bard o' nature since Robin's  
awa'."

Tennyson is said to have had his history in view in "The Lady of Shalott." Longfellow, Coleridge, Holmes, Montgomery, Whittier, poets of freedom and the fireside, and Halleck, who wrote too little for his country, all have testified to the light divine of his genius. These men and women too, she who wrote the "Old Arm-Chair," and many beside who believe in the beauty of a true womanhood, and who have elevated the world by the pen, have made it impossible to pronounce a eulogy upon his poetry.

In this collected evidence we see that humanity is not a national word; that he is not the idol of any class, sect, or denomination; but that all who love the genuine

have the power of appreciating, if they will but read, from the humblest person to the sweetest poet. This appreciation is just, for he is not one in whom finish predominates over feeling, or classical education over natural endowment. In his own simple yet sublime language he says: "The poetic genius of my country found me as Elijah found Elisha at the plough, and threw her inspiring mantle over me. She bade me sing the loves, the joys, the rural scenes, and rural pleasures of my native soil in my native tongue." He did it. He found that tongue a dialect, and he elevated it into a language. Words that were then considered Scottish barbarism, used only by a humble peasantry, belong now to our every-

day language. How many of his lines and verses stand out like proverbs, with Attic point and Spartan brevity! Match in natural terseness or clear-cut sentence :—

“O wad some Power the giftie gie us  
To see ourself as ithers see us!”

“The best-laid schemes o’ mice an’ men  
Gang aft agley.”

“A chiel’s amang you takin’ notes,  
And faith he’ll prent it.”

“Some wee short hour ayont the twal.”

“A man may tak’ a neebor’s part,  
Yet hae nae cash to spare him.”

“My freedom’s my lairdship nae monarch  
dare touch.”

“Man is a sodger and life is a fight.”

“Where you feel your honour grip,  
Let that aye be your border.”

“To make a happy household clime  
To weans and wife,  
Is the true pathos and sublime  
Of human life.”

Like current coin they continually circulate the world over. They have no national mint-mark; they need no secretary's signature. There is such a fund of common-sense in what he has written that mankind universally indorse it. It is drawn on every bank; for every one knows that common-sense is always accepted at sight without protest. He needed no rules or forms to write the language of the heart, as the language of the heart is the language of nature, and the language of nature is the same for all time. With his hands upon the plough he composed many of his sweetest



verses, and, while following the furrows on the fields of Ayrshire, exclaims—

“Gie me ae spark o’ nature’s fire,  
That’s a’ the learning I desire ;  
Then tho’ I drudge thro’ dub an’ mire,  
At pleugh or cart,  
My muse, tho’ hamely in attire,  
May touch the heart.”

It is said in mythology that Antæus, son of Poseidon and Gæa, the great giant and wrestler of Libya, was invincible so long as he remained in contact with the earth ; that even Hercules could not conquer him until he allowed himself to be raised bodily into the air. So Burns knew that *terra firma* even in poetry was safe, and thought it better to stoop to a floweret than to “leap at stars and fasten in the mire.”

Poets from the times of Homer and Virgil have invoked the Muse and looked up for poetry; Burns saw it at his feet—in the “Daisy,”

“Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flow’r,”

crushed by his ploughshare, and in the “Mousie”—

“Wee, sleekit, cowrin, tim’rous beastie,”

turned out to the winter’s cold.

Others might talk of the Olympian Nine, the slopes of Parnassus, and the fountains of Helicon; he felt a more natural inspiration along the streams where he wandered—

“In flower that bloomed and bird that sung,”

and his goddesses were neither inhabitants of grottoes nor the unsubstantial “fabric of a vision.” They lived in clay-biggins, very much like

his own, and they weighed a good deal more than either Venus or Minerva, troy weight or avoirdupois.

He was not ashamed of his humble fortune,—

“The star that ruled his luckless lot  
And fated him the russet coat,”—

and here were drawn his finest scenes. Dugald Stewart said: “I recollect Burns once told me, in one of our morning’s walks near Edinburgh, that the sight of so many smoking cottages gave a pleasure to his mind which no one could understand who had not witnessed, like himself, the happiness and the worth which they contained.”

This one sentence furnishes a key to many of his poems, and especially to that beautiful delineation, “The

Cotter's Saturday Night," the finest picture of life among the lowly ever produced by pen, brush, or pencil,—a living portrayal of a Christian home, which, I believe, has done enough good in Scotland to outweigh all the evil, whether real or imaginary, with which he has been charged by his most uncharitable critics, for it has given to many nurtured in the hard lap of poverty a deeper love for their fireside, their country, and their God.

From the first line to the last it is graphic beyond comparison ; at once beautiful, grand, and simple. In accurate delineation and simplicity it stands first among the illustrations of the poet's power. As you read it you can see the toil-worn cotter, at the close of a week's labour, taking

his homeward course upon the moor.  
You see the "expectant wee-things  
toddlin', stacherin' through" to meet  
him "wi' flichterin' noise and glee";  
the fire "blinkin' bonnilie" in his  
"wee bit ingle"; "his clean hearth-  
stane" and its sweetest accompani-  
ment — "his thrifty wifie's smile."  
And now the "elder bairns" come  
"drapping in," at service out "amang  
the farmers roun'," and the family  
are all assembled :—

"Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears;  
The mother wi' her needle and her shears,  
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the  
new;  
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's and their mistress's command,  
The youngers a' are warned to obey;  
And mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,  
And ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play;  
' And O! be sure and fear the Lord alway,

And mind your duty, duly, morn and night ;  
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,  
Implore His counsel and assisting might :  
They never sought in vain that sought the  
Lord aright.'"

The picture of the mother with her needle and her shears, making old clothes look almost as well's the new, calls up the past to some of us—the remembrance, it may be, of a far-off picture, sweeter than the Madonnas of Raphael. "But hark! a rap comes gently to the door." Jenny, their eldest daughter, woman-grown, "kens weel" the "meaning o' the same," and "tells how a neibor lad came o'er the moor, to do some errands and convoy her hame;" and now "the supper crowns their simple board," — "the halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food."

This done, the poem rises in grand sublimity until this picture of rural life becomes in truth a sacred drama. Burns frequently said that he thought there was something peculiarly venerable in the phrase "Let us worship God," used by a sober, decent head of a family introducing family worship, and the next stanzas show how deeply these words were impressed upon him :—

"The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face  
They round the ingle form a circle wide ;  
The sire turns o'er with patriarchal grace  
The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's pride :  
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,  
His lyart haffets wearing thin and bare ;  
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion  
glide,  
He wales a portion with judicious care ;  
And 'Let us worship God !' he says with  
solemn air."

Surely the Scottish people have reason to love their poet, for this poem, written at the early age of twenty-seven, seems a dedication of his genius to his country, and his whole soul is breathed into it from the first line to the concluding prayer of patriotism, "O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!"

Moreover, Burns dared to say, and that, too, one hundred years ago :—

"From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur  
springs,  
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd  
abroad;  
Princes and lords are but the breath of  
kings:  
'An honest man's the noblest work of  
God.'  
What is a lordling's pomp? A cumbrous  
load,



Disguising oft the wretch of human kind  
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness  
refined."

Nor does it detract from its grandeur to know that the sire of "The Cotter's Saturday Night" was his father; that the materials for its composition were all gathered at his quiet fireside; and that the little room where the poet was born was the scene of the drama. It is rather an additional proof of its grandeur that these lines, which express so truly the humble life of Scottish peasantry, firmly established in the faith of their fathers, have elevated this thatch - roofed cottage above the mansions which surround it, and made even the very rafters of the old tenement more valuable to-day than the gilded cornices or carved

tracery of the most princely palace in Britain.

Yes, and it was written in a poor garret over a farmer's stable. All through history, Genius, as it were a divinity among men, teaches them humility. Dante wanders in exile. Cervantes, a maimed soldier, conceives of his inimitable satire, 'Don Quixote,' in a prison on a bed of straw. Murillo, the Spanish Raphael, dies in a poor hospital at Seville, and, while his hand is stiffening in death, takes a coal from the embers and sketches upon the wall a dying Saviour for the attendant priest, to establish his identity and secure respectable burial. In Bedford jail Bunyan writes 'Pilgrim's Progress.' In a London garret Goldsmith his "Deserted Village." At Stratford-

on-Avon Genius selected a humble house for the birthplace of the prince of poets ; and, while Oxford and Cambridge were busy in educating learned dulness, she found a poor printer-boy at the bench, and, whispering from the clouds her secret, wrote the name of Franklin in letters of light. When 'Poor Richard's Almanac' sold for fifty - two dollars at the sale of the Ingraham Library, Philadelphia, what would be the value of that key, which, fastened to a little kite - cord, unlocked the gates of a new science, making true the old fable of Prometheus by actually drawing the fire from heaven that to-day binds continents together, and which, in its future development, may help to explain the relation of mind and matter ; as genius in itself

is the electricity of mind, a spark flashing off from the great battery, the speaking-point of a generation ; for in the heart and brain of him who writes himself a unit in the world's history centre as it were the magnetic lines which make the universe symmetrical and complete,—the voice of a people, the voice of God finding an utterance : and poets and philosophers, with their heads resting here upon the stony ingratitude of mankind, see more often than those upon beds of down the angels ascending and descending the ladder that reaches from them to heaven.

Burns felt this power, genius, electricity, inspiration—call it what you will—through all his poetry. He knew that he was writing for all time. Pitt, the great scholar of Eng-

land, said to Sir Henry Addington :  
“ I can think of no verse since Shakespeare which comes so sweetly and at once from nature.” Byron recognised the assertion that Burns rivalled all but Shakespeare's name below ; and Scott said that “ No poet, with the exception of Shakespeare, ever possessed the power of exciting the most varied and discordant emotions with such rapid transition.” Surely he has been assigned by common consent—ay, rather by acclamation—a high seat in the Valhalla of poets, next to the Bard of Avon.

In no poem do these varied qualities shine out with brighter lustre than in “ Tam o' Shanter,”—the ludicrous, the awful, and the sublime all woven and blended together like a piece of old tapestry. The very

mention of the name is sufficient to make a Scotsman smile, even to the third and the fourth generation. Each line is a separate picture; more than any other poem it is of itself a gallery of paintings. By a single stroke of the pen we see "drouthy neibors neibors meet"; we see them "bousing at the nappy, An' getting fou and unco happy"; and in the two succeeding lines we are transported across "waters, slaps, and stiles" to their homes, where sits their "sulky, sullen dame," neither in grief nor in prayer, but

"Gath'ring her brows like gath'ring storm,  
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm."

This is a general introduction; now for the preface, in which all of Tam's failings are rehearsed, as in the chorus of a Greek tragedy:—

“ O Tam ! hadst thou but been sae wise  
As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice !  
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,  
A bletherin, blusterin drunken blellum ;  
That frae November till October,  
Ae market-day thou was na sober ;  
That ilka melder wi' the Miller,  
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller ;  
That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on  
The Smith and thee gat roarin' fou on ;  
She prophesied, that, late or soon,  
Thou wad be found, deep-drown'd in Doon,  
Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk,  
By Alloway's auld, haunted kirk.”

This familiar and endearing advice, when Tam was in his normal sphere, was well calculated to win his regard ; and it is related on good authority that she was well qualified to keep him away from home. Like a lady recently departed, she had a winning way to make every one hate her. You may not have noticed her

decease in your newspapers. She didn't live here. Oh no! It was only Mrs Caudle. Yet gladly in passing would I pronounce a paragraph, yea, an epitaph, directly to her memory. Thou! who wert successively and quite successfully the wife of Jupiter, Socrates, Tam o' Shanter, and Mr Caudle! Has it come to this? Have thy granddaughters of this the nineteenth century despoiled thee of thy sceptre by exchanging the curtain for the rostrum — the private for the public — and sacrificed thee, a poor old woman, and a party by the name of Caudle, in order to get not the jewels on thy fingers, but a dignified, respectable, embroidered night-cap for their new-fangled Goddess of Liberty!



" Ah, gentle dames ! it gars me greet,  
To think how mony counsels sweet,  
How mony lengthen'd, sage advices,  
The husband frae the wife despises ! "

Preface and introduction are now concluded, and the tale begins, the thread of which will be recalled to your memory by a few quotations and a running commentary ; and these quotations need no apology, for they reveal better than any analysis the quality and nature of his genius. Although the little four-windowed hotel or inn, where Tam and his friends were wont to assemble, with its old-time chairs and wooden drinking - cup, has long been a landmark of a past century, still the poem is always new even to those who know it by heart. Here, up a narrow pair of

stairs, for the room is on the second storey—

“Ae market night,  
Tam had got planted unco right,  
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,  
Wi’ reaming swats, that drank divinely;  
And at his elbow, Souter Johnnie,  
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony:  
Tam lo’ed him like a very brither;  
They had been fou for weeks thegither.  
The night drave on wi’ sang an’ clatter;  
And aye the ale was growing better:  
The Landlady and Tam grew gracious,  
Wi’ favours secret, sweet, and precious:  
The Souter tauld his queerest stories;  
The Landlord’s laugh was ready chorus;  
The storm without might rair and rustle,  
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.”

However much we may deplore his excesses, we all are compelled to say with Wordsworth, the Christian poet of the nineteenth century: “Who but some narrow-minded Puritan in works of art ever read

without delight the picture here drawn of his convivial exaltation ?” Yet, even here, in the midst of wild confusion and careless song, Burns, you know, stops to impress the moral, which every one knows by heart, which no man ever knew better than himself :—

“ Pleasures are like poppies spread,  
You seize the flow’r, its bloom is shed :  
Or like the snow-falls in the river,  
A moment white—then melts for ever ;  
Or like the Borealis race,  
That flit ere you can point their place ;  
Or like the Rainbow’s lovely form  
Evanishing amid the storm.”

But—

“ Nae man can tether Time nor Tide,  
The hour approaches Tam maun ride—  
That hour, o’ night’s black arch the key-stane,  
That dreary hour Tam mounts his beast in ;  
And sic a night he took the road in,  
As ne’er poor sinner was abroad in.”

To Burns even an idea is material,  
possessing form and substance; and  
here it is almost impossible to fix  
the idea as he saw it—the black  
arch of night spanning the heavens,  
with twelve as its key-stone, and,  
under that arch, the elements all  
in uproar; for—

“The wind blew as ’twad blawn its last;  
The rattling showers rose on the blast;  
The speedy gleams the darkness swallowed;  
Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellowed:  
That night a child might understand,  
The deil had business on his hand.”

Yet—

“Tam skelpit on thro’ dub and mire,  
Despising wind, and rain, and fire.”

Now he is crossing the ford—

“Where in the snaw the chapman smoor’d;  
And past the birks and meikle stane,  
Where drunken Charlie brak’s neck-bane;

And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,  
Where hunters fand the murdered bairn :  
And near the thorn, aboon the well,  
Where Mungo's mither hang'd hersel."

He hears the roaring of the Doon  
rising above the doubling storm ;  
and there is auld Alloway Kirk, sur-  
rounded by its spectral graveyard  
—but, why the light bursting from  
the window ? What is that upon  
the table ? What the strange dance ?  
Who is the musician ? No wonder  
that his Maggie stood

“ Right sair astonish'd,  
Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,  
She ventur'd forward on the light ;  
And, wow ! Tam saw an unco sight !  
Warlocks and witches in a dance :  
Nae cotillion brent new frae France,  
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels  
Put life and mettle in their heels.  
A winnock-bunker in the east,  
There sat Auld Nick, in shape o' beast ;

A towzie tyke, black, grim and large,  
To gie them music was his charge ;  
He screw'd the pipes, and gart them skirl,  
Till roof an' rafters a' did dirl."

Then—

" As Tammie glower'd, amaz'd and curious,  
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious ;  
The Piper loud and louder blew,  
The dancers quick and quicker flew,  
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they  
cleekit ;"

until the star-witch appears upon the  
stage, whose garment—

" In longitude tho' sorely scanty,"  
" Was " yet " her best, and she was vauntie ;"

and a Highland washing-scene, once  
personally witnessed in the wild pass  
of Glencoe, near the banks of the  
dark-flowing Cona ; or the adventure  
of Mr Pickwick at the Great White  
Horse of Ipswich with the middle-

aged lady in yellow curl-papers ; or the yearly resurrected Black Crook, which once, in New York, for six hundred nights drew crowds of *respectable* people, were barely more interesting ; and

“ Tam stood like ane bewitch'd,  
And thought his very e'en enrich'd ;  
Even Satan glower'd, and fidg'd fu' fain,  
And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main :  
Till first ae caper, syne anither,  
Tam tint his reason a' thegither,  
And roars out, 'Weel done, Cutty-sark !'  
And in an instant all was dark :  
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,  
When out the hellish legion sallied.”

Then begins a race of about thirty rods for the old bridge, which has but two parallels for speed in history—the famous ride of John Gilpin through “ Merry Islington ” and the well-known experience of Ichabod

Crane, the Yankee schoolmaster of Sleepy Hollow. The very lines themselves seem to gallop :—

“ Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,  
And win the key-stane o’ the brig ;  
There, at them thou thy tail may toss,  
A running stream they dare na cross.  
But ere the key-stane she could make,  
The fient a tail she had to shake !  
For Nannie, far before the rest,  
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,  
And flew at Tam wi’ furious ettle ;  
But little wist she Maggie’s mettle !  
Ae spring brought off her master hale,  
But left behind her ain grey tail.”

From ‘ Blackwood’s Magazine ’  
down to nameless weeklies, across  
that frightful chasm in literature,  
no narrative or tale was ever more  
graphically concluded than this of  
Tam, or more thoroughly cut short  
or abridged than that of his un-



fortunate Maggie. I also believe that there is no ruin in Scotland, not even fair Melrose, invested with greater interest than this little ivy-grown, roofless kirk of Alloway. The history of those abbeys and cathedrals, whose crumbling walls resemble the fossil remains of some fabled monster, seems unreal compared with the comic reality of that midnight scene. Every day persons look in at the little church window, repeople it with that strange assemblage, then take the road for the old brig, and, standing upon the key-stone, actually look for a hair for memory. They generally don't find it. But the reality of this fiction is another illustration of the story of the reverend friend who asked Garrick : " Why is it when I preach

the sublime truths of Christianity that my congregation sleep, while your audience, conscious that you are acting an unreal part, hangs with breathless attention upon every word?" "Because," replied the great actor, "perhaps you speak the truth as if it were false, and I speak the false as if it were truth." Burns wrote even fiction as if it were reality, and you cannot escape the belief.

In Westminster Abbey, among the quaint tombs and effigies of the great, the good, and the wicked, there is one which instantly arrests attention—the tomb of Mrs Nightingale. Death, a sheeted skeleton, is represented as starting from the grave in the act of launching a dart at his victim, she sinking into her

husband's arms, who vainly attempts to arrest the blow. It is considered by many one of the greatest achievements of modern art, and holds one by a horrid spell; but this marble of Roubiliac, full as it is of the horrible, has no more reality than the description of Burns meeting "Death" one evening, and their discussion in reference to Doctor Hornbook. You see them sitting cheek by jowl in the moonlight; one with "An awfu' scythe out-ower his shouther," although it is the sowing instead of the mowing time of the year, and the other, in rather an uncertain condition, contemplating the moon as she rose over the distant hills:—

"The rising moon began to glowre,  
The distant Cumnock hills out-owre;

To count her horns, wi' a' my power,  
I set mysel;  
But whether she had three or four,  
I cou'd na tell."

We have, moreover, no poem more real or ludicrous than his familiar "Address to the Deil." After the manner of the "Ancient Mariner," he button-holes "Auld 'Hornie,' 'Satan,' 'Nick,' or 'Cloutie,'" and converses with him in a manner that would shock the classical Satan of Milton or the Mephistopheles of Faust. In a strange mixture he weaves together some of the popular beliefs of his "reverend grannie," and then, pitying the Deil for his misfortune, brings his familiarity to a most striking climax :—

"But fare-you-weel, auld 'Nickie-ben!  
O wad ye tak' a thought an' men',

Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—  
Still hae a stake;  
I'm wae to think upo' yon den  
Ev'n for your sake!"

It is said that the wit of Curran, always ready, crumbled from his speech like pure gold; the wit of Sheridan was sharp like polished steel. In Burns are combined the two qualities. He is at once natural and pointed.

Thomas Carlyle aptly said that Burns, dealing with the pathetic, often wrote in English; but, dealing with the humorous, generally in the Scottish language. In illustration of the pathetic, I take one of his best-known lyrics:—

"Ye banks and braes and streams around  
The castle o' Montgomery!  
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,  
Your waters never drumlie:

There Simmer first unfald her robes,  
And there the langest tarry ;  
For there I took the last farewell  
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloom'd the gay, green birk,  
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,  
As underneath their fragrant shade,  
I clasp'd her to my bosom !  
The golden Hours, on angel wings,  
Flew o'er me and my Dearie ;  
For dear to me, as light and life,  
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' mony a vow, and lock'd embrace,  
Our parting was fu' tender ;  
And, pledging aft to meet again,  
We tore oursels asunder ;  
But oh ! fell death's untimely frost,  
That nipt my Flower sae early !  
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,  
That wraps my Highland Mary.

O pale, pale now those rosy lips,  
I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly !  
And clos'd for aye the sparkling glance  
That dwalt on me sae kindly !

And mouldering now in silent dust,  
The heart that lo'ed me dearly !  
But still within my bosom's core  
Shall live my Highland Mary."

In sharp contrast with this we have the equally well-known poem of humour and satire, "To a Louse, seen on a Lady's Bonnet at Church."

"Ha ! whaur ye gaun, ye crowlin ferlie?  
Your impudence protects you sairly ;  
I canna say but ye strunt rarely,  
Owre gauze and lace ;  
Tho' faith ! I fear, ye dine but sparely  
On sic a place.

Ye ugly, creepin, blasted wonner,  
Detested, shunn'd by saunt an' sinner,  
How daur ye set your fit upon her—  
Sae fine a lady?  
Gae somewhere else, and seek your dinner  
On some poor body.

Swith ! in some beggar's hauffet squattle,  
Wi' ither kindred, jumping cattle ;

There ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle,  
In shoals and nations ;  
Whaur horn nor bane ne'er daur unsettle  
Your thick plantations.

Now haud you there, ye're out o' sight,  
Below the fatt'rels, snug and tight ;  
Na, faith ye yet ! ye'll no be right,  
Till ye've got on it—  
The verra tapmost, tow'rin height  
O' Miss's bonnet.

My sooth ! right bauld ye set your nose out,  
As plump an' grey as ony groset :  
O for some rank, mercurial rozet,  
Or fell, red smeddum,  
I'd gie you sic a hearty dose o't,  
Wad dress your droddum.

I wad na been surprised to spy  
You on an auld wife's flannen toy ;  
Or aiblins some bit duddie boy,  
On's wyliecoat ;  
But Miss's fine Lunardi ! fye !  
How daur ye do't ?



O Jeanie, dinna toss your head,  
An' set your beauties a' abried !  
Ye little ken what cursed speed  
    The blastie's makin :  
Thae winks an' finger-ends, I dread,  
    Are notice takin.

O wad some Power the giftie gie us  
To see oursel as ithers see us !  
It wad frae mony a blunder free us,  
    An' foolish notion :  
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,  
    An' ev'n devotion !"

His finest humour, however, is thoroughly Scottish, and I pass from these illustrations of his power, as seen in the delineation of "The Cotter's Saturday Night," the dramatic in humour in "Tam o' Shanter," the wit, humour, and pathos of his minor poems, to his boldness of utterance and his love for the genuine.

There were few persons in his day who dared to use the pointed quill without smoothing the line down with its feather. He saw in the diamonds and jewels of a proud aristocracy the crystallised tears of poverty. The peasantry needed a poet, and God sent one—sent one who believed in the genuine aristocracy—manhood. He did not believe in the old adage, “King’s chaff is better than other folk’s corn;” or in the idea expressed by Lord Chesterfield, too often adopted as a standard rule of society, “Polished brass is better than rough gold;” but, with a heart full to overflowing of liberty, he rang out, like a chime of bells, these lines which proclaim the gospel of a wider brotherhood, and embody

in a word the Declaration of Independence—

“ The rank is but the guinea's stamp.  
The Man's the gowd for a' that.  
A Man's a Man for a' that.”

On the one side he saw pampered luxury, on the other humble poverty, with an impassable gulf between. He saw the piers which hold up the structure of ancestral supremacy resting, with years of oppression, upon what was considered, although not yet named, the mudsills of society. The ruined castles scattered over his country were no surer vestiges of feudalism and vassalage than this ingrained fear for rank, the ribbon, the Star and the Garter. He attacked it, and when he exclaimed—

“ It’s comin’ yet for a’ that,  
That Man to Man the world o’er  
Shall brothers be for a’ that,”

he struck what Hosea Bigelow calls the eternal rock of God’s idea—Justice. He believed that there was a difference between affectation and respectability, between the seeming and the being. He saw corruption protected in high places, and believed that—

“ In fair virtue’s heavenly road,  
The cottage leaves the palace far behind ”;

and he lived long enough to know, although dying at the early age of thirty-seven, that “ man’s inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn.” He asked the nobility to be mindful of the weak and the poor, and he taught the peasantry

contentment. He told them "the heart benevolent and kind the most resembles God," and also—

"It's no in titles nor in rank,  
It's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,  
To purchase peace and rest :  
It's no in makin muckle mair ;  
It's no in books ; it's no in lear,  
To make us truly blest :  
If happiness hae not her seat  
And centre in the breast,  
We may be wise, or rich, or great,  
But never can be blest ;  
Nae treasures nor pleasures  
Could make us happy lang ;  
The heart ay's the part ay'  
That makes us right or wrang."

But it was hypocrisy that called forth his whole energy ; and, believing that "consistency is a jewel," he commenced the attack by laying bare his own bosom. He was aware that his own life was not

free from faults, and grave ones ; but instead of secreting them he wore in public the "scarlet letter" of his history, sometimes in sadness, sometimes in defiance. He had been placed upon the stool of repentance by persons no better than himself. He knew the burning letter was branded upon the bosom of some who pointed the finger of shame, and he returned scorn with scorn. Discussion in the Church between the Old and New Light factions, which, Whittier says, too often "melts in acid sects the Christian pearl of charity," was driving the country half-mad. He likened it to the old and new light theories of the moon ; and one side cursed him and the other blessed him. Inde-

cent festivities like the "Holy Fair" accompanied the administration of the Sacrament. He ridiculed them, and to-day it is universally acknowledged in Scotland that the pen of Burns did much toward reforming old abuses. It must be remembered that he attacked men, not religion; hypocrisy, not Christianity. His "Holy Willie's Prayer," so often quoted against him, was only a satire on a great pretender to sanctity, who in reality was anything but godly, made free with the money of the poor, and afterward died in a ditch of a drunken debauch.

But it is not my purpose to pronounce a eulogy on his life or to draw a moral from his failings. He has written his history without reserve in his poetry, and I only take


the genius and the character of that poetry as the focal points of its expression. I might adduce to you on satisfactory evidence, from one of his nieces in Ayr in 1870, that to the end of life he always conducted devotional exercises in his family; that he regretted and repented of his errors; that he was benevolent and kind to his friends. But, so far as this or so far as his life is not connected with his poetry and the proper understanding of it, I prefer to leave it neutral territory, and allow each person to read his history and draw his own conclusions. Yet I do say that those who accuse him of atheism or unbelief know not whereof they affirm. At the time he was writing his finest poetry, France was trampling monarchy



under foot, and, catching the spirit but not the stability of the American struggle of 1776, took up the cry—

“Liberty, equality, fraternity !”

and, teaching that liberty meant licence, poured a tide of filth and atheism into the heart of society, which brought its punishment upon the third and fourth generation. Burns, separating this liberty from licence, hailed the one and rebuked the other. Believing in Divine Providence, he disregarded the new-fledged theories of Voltaire, over which Europe was running wild, and, in a poetic epistle to his young friend “Andrew,” improves on the advice of old Polonius; for Burns introduces the only anchor that is sure and steadfast :—



“The great Creator to revere,  
Must sure become the creature ;  
But still the preaching cant forbear,  
And ev’n the rigid feature :  
Yet ne’er with wits profane to range,  
Be complaisance extended ;  
An atheist’s laugh’s a poor exchange  
For Deity offended.

When ranting round in pleasure’s ring,  
Religion may be blinded ;  
Or if she gie a random sting,  
It may be little minded ;  
But when on life we’re tempest-driv’n,  
A conscience but a canker—  
A correspondence fixed wi’ Heav’n  
Is sure a noble anchor !”

It was fitting that the national poet of Scotland should be a bold advocate in the cause of truth ; that a nation which never compromised with error should have a poet who looked neither to atheists nor to hypocrites for his authority. Burns loved his

country, and believed that his countrymen were loyal to principle. He had the faith of the old Scotsman: "When Nelson said at Trafalgar, 'England expects every man to do his duty,' he didn't need to include Scotland, for he *keinned* that the Scots would do theirs." He believed in nobility of soul and freedom of action. A gentleman at a dinner at Dumfries proposed the health of William Pitt. England had just lost her colonies in America, and the wound was not yet healed; but Burns said, with the colour mounting to his face, "Let us drink the health of a greater and better man, George Washington." Even in poverty, when asked to write the songs of his country for money, he replies, "As to any remuneration, you may think my

songs either above or below price, for they shall absolutely be the one or the other ; to talk of money would be downright prostitution of soul." When the Earl of Glencairn died, he remembered all his kindness and wrote these lines, more enduring than monuments of brass or marble :—

"The bridegroom may forget the bride  
Was made his wedded wife yestreen ;  
The monarch may forget the crown  
That on his head an hour has been ;  
The mother may forget the child  
That smiles sae sweetly on her knee ;  
But I'll remember thee, Glencairn,  
And a' that thou hast done for me."

In spite of "misfortune's cold nor'west" and the everyday struggle, which he likened to the unceasing toil of a galley-slave, his life was full of poetic incidents. The crushed flower touched his sympathy, and

when he cleared the rigs of corn he spared the thistle—the emblem of his country. In the old churchyard of Canongate, Edinburgh, he saw the neglected grave of Fergusson, and, from his scanty purse, raised a memorial to guide the lovers of Scottish song to the grave of a brother bard. It is said that the charity which plenty spares to poverty is human and earthly, but it becomes divine and heavenly when poverty gives to want. Crossing the Tweed, and standing for the first time on the soil of England, he uncovers his head, and, looking towards Scotland with uplifted hands, pronounces aloud, in accents of the deepest devotion, the concluding stanzas of “The Cotter’s Saturday Night.” At Dunfermline he knelt

and kissed with fervour the flagstone which covers the Restorer of Scottish Independence; and, one night, on the banks of the Dee, amid the roaring of winds and the wrath of the elements, he was for three hours unconscious of the storm, charging the English army at Bannockburn. The next day he produced that grand national lyric—

“Scots, wha hae wi’ Wallace bled,  
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led.”

When he laid the foundation of his house, he took off his hat and asked a blessing on the home which was to shelter his household gods; and when he parted with “Highland Mary” near the banks of the Ayr, they stood on either side of a burn, or rivulet, and, laving their hands

in the stream, held a Bible between them, pronouncing their vows to be faithful to each other. From that hour his life was tinged with sadness; for the stream, which there separated them, widened and deepened, until his "Highland Mary" became his "Mary in Heaven." Years afterwards, on the anniversary of that day, he writes with the tenderest feeling :—

"Thou lingering star, with less'ning ray,  
That lov'st to greet the early morn,  
Again thou usher'st in the day  
My Mary from my soul was torn."

In this natural emotion, which threw a poetic light even on his everyday life, we find the fountain-head of his lyrical poetry. It was always his wish that he—

“For poor auld Scotland’s sake,  
Some usefu’ plan or book could make,  
Or sing a sang at least.”

In his early memoranda he writes :  
“I am hurt to see the other towns,  
rivers, and woods of Scotland immortalised in song, while my own native counties, Carrick, Kyle, and Cunningham, the birthplace of many famous philosophers, soldiers, and statesmen, have never had one Scottish poet of any eminence to make the Irvine, the Ayr, and the Doon emulate the Tay, the Forth, the Ettrick, and the Tweed. This is a complaint I would gladly remedy, but, alas ! I am far unequal to the task both in genius and education.”  
Surely no defect was ever more thoroughly remedied ; for now the Tay, the Forth, the Ettrick, and



even the Tweed, are almost unknown compared with the "Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon," "Sweet Afton," and the "Ayr." He sang the songs of his country as no poet ever sang before, and touched every note and half-note in the octave from tenderness, love, and passion to friendship, truth, and patriotism.

Some of his expressions have no parallel in English idiom. When he spoke of his ancestor's going to victory "Red wat shod," he placed it beyond the power of translation. You can transfer gloaming into twilight, cannie into cautious, burn into rivulet, a biggin or sheiling into a cottage, brae into a declivity, and ingle into a fireplace, but it is impossible to translate "Auld Lang Syne." What a condensed history

in three brief words ! What cordial  
hospitality and warm greeting in

“ Here’s a hand, my trusty fier’,  
And gie’s a hand o’ thine ! ”

How many hearts find in them a  
bond of close companionship, al-  
though far separated, and it may be  
friendless, under the burning suns of  
Africa, amid the tropic glories of  
the Southern continent, under the  
shadows of Egyptian Pyramids, or  
the still older mounds of Mexico ;  
for they are on the lips of mankind  
in every land where civilisation has  
gained a foothold, and under the  
flag of every ship which goes down  
to the sea to do merchandise upon  
the great waters. And how many  
thousand Scotsmen scattered all  
over the world are carried back to

Scotia's hills by one word, the  
"gowan" (the daisy) :—

" We twa hae run about the braes,  
And pou'd the gowans fine ;  
But we've wander'd mony a weary fitt,  
Sin' auld lang syne.

We twa hae paidl'd in the burn,  
Frae morning sun till dine ;  
But seas between us braid hae roar'd,  
Sin' auld lang syne."

Although the draught of kindness sparkles with joy, there are tears in the bottom of the cup. Yes, to all of us they speak of the past ; for many who were with us, as it were but yesterday, are now separated by oceans, some by death. Some who went forth with energy and in the strength of manhood to plough furrows of thought through the world, are now sleeping in furrows ploughed

deep by cannon-balls—the loved and the lost of our “auld lang syne.” But in these lines they all are remembered, although many sleep without a monument in the mountain defiles of India or along that tract of country where *the fierce fire of battle succeeded in welding a broken union*. Songs which thus find a response in the universal heart of humanity, like those which stir the blood of a nation, have an influence which cannot be measured. Mechanism will give you the force of an engine, the strength of a bridge, or the tension of a cable, but it is impossible to determine the power of an idea which takes hold of the heart and rises to the lips of a nation; and old Fletcher said well, “Let me write the songs of a people,

and I care not who make her laws." In the Reformation of Germany, the songs of the Fatherland went hand in hand with the theses of Luther nailed upon the Cathedral doors at Wittenberg. When Knox was driven from his country, and toiling in the galleys on the river Loire exclaimed, "Give me Scotland or I die!" the poems of Lyndsay of the Mount were working out his deliverance and the cause of truth. The last Napoleon prohibited years ago the singing of the "Marseillaise Hymn" in the streets of Paris. He knew if that song were raised in the cause of truth, it were mightier than an army with banners. He was literally afraid of that grand stirring chorus, "Marchons, Marchez!" and when I heard it in the

dark summer of 1870, as it rose up from the heart of an excited nation bursting its fetters of law, and saw the soldiery kneel as they sang it around the tricoloured flag which had led to so many fields of victory, I thought that if France were only united, rallying around that song, she could withstand the Powers of Europe. Yes, from the invasion of William of Normandy, when Taillifer the minstrel advanced before the army animating them with songs of Charlemagne and Roland, and then rushed among the opposing ranks and perished, until the yesterday of

“Tramp, tramp, tramp, the boys are marching,”

the influence of national songs can-

not be measured. The poets who have written them may have died in poverty or in exile. They may have suffered martyrdom at the stake or at the bar of public opinion ; but their lines live, the monument of their exile and the crown of their martyrdom. You may burn the writer, but the fire only melts the links of tyranny. A true poet cannot be a slave. He feels deeply, and liberty is his inspiration. He knows there is an honour more sacred than law, a natural veneration more effective than enacted statutes. National honour is stronger than political bulwarks. This is the boundary of a Divine Providence. Political bulwarks are often the mere mud-dykes of a generation. Burns was at once national in his patriotism

and universal in his humanity. He has left in his hundred songs a glorious legacy to his countrymen and the world, for the vital element of a whole people was concentrated in his veins, and when he died the rich and the poor alike turned aside to weep, asking, "Who will be our poet now?" Time, the viceroy of the Great Judge, has answered the question. Burns even in death is crowned the "Poet-Laureate" of his country.



The night was cold, he could not wait,  
He left his message at the door ;  
Ere morning came he took the gate ;—  
We worship, we can do no more.

# The Auld Brig's Welcome

Delivered on the occasion of  
Unveiling the Burns Statue at Ayr,  
July 8, 1891

*Two of the happiest weeks of my life were spent at Ayr in the summer of 1870. To come again after all these years and be invited, as an American and a lover of Burns, to take part in unveiling a Statue to his memory, seemed to me a happy fulfilment of the universal brotherhood for which the poet so nobly wrought.*



THE AULD BRIG hails wi'  
hearty cheer :—  
Uncover, lads, for Burns is  
here !

The bard who links us all to fame,  
And blends his own with Scotia's name.

Seven hundred years the winding Ayr  
Has glassed my floating image there ;  
I've seen long centuries glide away,  
But Robin brought our blithest day.

I heard the Thirteenth's warlike peal  
Wake serried ranks of glinting steel :  
All wrinkled now, yet in my prime,  
I wait with joy the Twentieth's chime.

I cherish weel in memory bright  
The glorious deeds of Wallace wight,  
And deem the very stones are blest  
Which bind the arch his feet have pressed.

I mind the time King Robert's band  
With sweeping oar left Arran's strand ;  
The flame that lit yon Carrick hill  
All round the world is shining still.

Old Coila's had her share of fame,  
Her bead-roll treasures many a name ;  
She's had her heroes great and sma',  
But Robin stands aboon them a'.

The auld clay-biggin of his birth  
Becomes the shrine of all the earth ;  
The room where rose the Cotter's prayer  
The proudest heritage of Ayr.

No starlit sky, no summer noon,  
But kens the banks o' bonnie Doon ;  
No human heart but fondly turns  
Responsive to the Land of Burns.

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Ah, Burns ! who dares to call thee poor !  
Each skylark nest on yonder moor,  
Each daisy-bloom on flowery mead,  
The lambs that on the meadows feed,—

Each field and brae by burn or stream  
Where wandering lovers come to dream,  
Are all thine own. As vassals all  
We gather here from princely hall,—

From lowly cot, from hills afar,  
From southern clime, from western star,  
To bring our love ; all hearts are thine  
By title time can never tyne.

The crowning meed of praise belongs  
To him who makes a people's songs ;  
Who strikes one note—the common good,  
One chord—a wider brotherhood ;

Who drops a word of cheer to bless  
His fellow-mortal in distress,  
And lightens on life's dusty road  
Some traveller weary of his load ;

Who finds the Mousie's trembling heart  
Of God's great universe a part ;  
And in the Daisy's crimson tips  
Discerns a soul with human lips.

We little dreamed when "Mailie" died  
Those tender words would speed so wide ;  
Men smiled and wept and went their  
way,—  
The prince was clad in hodden gray.

Though but a brig, it garred me greet  
To hear him pour his Vision sweet,  
And in one crowning climax seal  
His pity even for the Deil.

To see the couthie Twa Dogs there  
Their joys and griefs wi' ither share ;—  
A cantie tale, it made me smile  
That sic a lad was born in Kyle ;

Who caught the witches in a dance,  
And bound them all in lasting trance ;

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The very land is bright and gay  
Since Tam o' Shanter rode this way.

The Auld Brig kens the story well  
These rippling wavelets love to tell :  
"Ayr, gurgling, kiss'd his pebbled  
shore,"—  
A fonder kiss his waters bore.

That raptured hour, that sacred vow,  
Are love's eternal treasures now ;  
Montgomery's towers may fall away,  
But Highland Mary lives for aye.

And sweeter still the swelling song  
Of loyal love repairing wrong ;  
Like mavis notes that gently fa' :—  
"Of a' the airts the wind can blaw."

Brave bonnie Jean ! We love to tell  
The story from thy lips that fell ;  
The lengthened life which Heaven gave  
Casts radiant twilight on his grave.



A noble woman, strong to shield ;  
Her tender heart his trusty bield ;  
The critic from her doorway turns  
With faith renewed and love for Burns.

She knew as no one else could know  
The heavy burden of his woe ;  
The carking care, the wasting pain,—  
Each welded link of misery's chain.

She saw his early sky o'ercast,  
And gloomy shadows gathering fast,  
His soul by bitter sorrow torn,  
And knew that man was made to mourn.

She heard him by the sounding shore  
Which speaks his name for evermore,  
And felt the anguish of his prayer :  
“ Farewell, the bonnie banks of Ayr.”

Oh Robert Burns ! by tempest tossed,  
Storm-swept, by cruel whirlwinds crossed ;  
Thy prayers, like David's psalms of old,  
Make all our plaints and wailings cold.

*The Auld Brig's Welcome.* 81

In weakness sown, yet raised in might,  
He wept that we might know the right ;  
His sweetest pleasures pain-imbued ;  
His songs a drama's interlude.

And who dare thrust his idle word  
Where God's own equities are heard ?  
"Who made the heart, 'tis He alone"—  
Let him that's guiltless cast the stone.

We know but this : his living song  
Protects the weak and tramples wrong ;  
Refracting radiance of delight,  
His prismsed genius, clear and bright,

Illumes all Scotland far and wide,  
And Caledonia throbs with pride  
To hear her grand old Doric swell  
From Highland crag to Lowland dell ;

To find, where'er her children stray,  
Her "Auld Lang Syne," her "Scots, wha  
hae,"

And words of hope which proudly span  
The centuries vast—"a man's a man."

Then welcome, Burns, from shore to  
shore!

All hail, our Robin, evermore!

Though late, we greet the Ploughman's  
name

Full in the morning of his fame.

The  
Immortal Memory of  
Robert Burns

*GREETING FROM*  
*THE EDINBURGH BURNS CLUB*

*"Auld Ayr to-night maun be fu' crouse*  
*Wi' Robert Burns and Wallace Bruce."*



R CHAIRMAN, CROUPIERS, and GENTLEMEN,  
—All over Great Britain  
to-night there are woven  
messages of electricity; and all over  
the land beyond the sea, from  
Florida to Minnesota, from Maine  
to California, the wires are busy  
exchanging fraternal greetings for  
your peasant poet, and one spark  
of the electric message from the  
good old town of Chester, Pennsylv-  
ania, has come under the Atlantic  
to find utterance here in the very  
heart of old Coila, at this hour the

for ever as twin rivers of song,  
came to speak a wider humanity.  
This is the reason why all the world  
to-night is listening and turning its  
face towards you, as towards the  
shrine and the Mecca of all poesy.


Who was this man? Let us trace  
his life. You know, by daily association  
with scenes that frame his history,  
better than I do — although  
I have cherished for twenty years  
the memory of those pleasant weeks  
in 1870—you know better than I  
the clay biggin by “auld Alloway  
Kirk;” Mount Oliphant, where he  
went as a boy of seven; Lochlee,  
a door-hinge of which I treasure,  
framed in velvet, given to me by  
the father of a man at this table,  
Mr Scoular, of Ayr, whom you all  
esteem. I read the story of his

---

life at Mossgiel, and, through a rift in the clouds, see him on his way to Edinburgh after the publishing of the Kilmarnock edition—five volumes of which would now be enough to board an ordinary poet for six years. I see Robert Burns in Edinburgh, as he goes to the humble shelter of a friend from Ayrshire; I see him in High Street, under the shadow of St Giles'; I see him at the home of the Duchess of Gordon; with Erskine, with Dugald Stewart, and the great men of that day, who made Edinburgh and all Scotland famous as an intellectual centre. I follow him on those pleasant tours through the Highlands, and down the valley of the Tweed—the future Magician of which he had just met, a lad of seventeen, in Edinburgh;



thence to Ellisland. I see him leave the banks of the Nith. I go with him to the humble shelter in Dumfries, and there, upon a sick-bed, thirty-seven years of age, behold his life finished, and his work done. And what runs all through this history of Robert Burns' life? It is the humble quality of everything he associated with: he lived permanently with humility, to reach upwards to the stars, and to sing like the skylark that has its home down among the meadows. He visited the great men of Edinburgh, and found himself equal to them. But his everyday life even there was of the same humble quality. It was only in rarer moments that he met with men who had tastes in affinity with his own. So much for the



man who came through humility and the quiet walks of life.

Now for his poems. Trace them from the early love-scene of the harvest-field. Note his responsive sympathy and tender love for "Poor Mailie." That was the first time the great humanity of Burns asserted itself over all living creation. Follow them down to the hour that he ploughed up the daisy and the mouse; to the "Cotter's Saturday Night," and the "Twa Brigs" of your burgh:—

"Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses  
For honest men and bonnie lasses."

Behold Captain Grose at Allo-way Kirkyard, sketching for his volume of 'Scottish Antiquities' the old ruin which the poet was to fill

with the immortal witchery of his genius, and so on to the sweet refrain, "O wert thou in the cauld blast." What is the quality of this poetry? I take it that the one great secret of Burns' power is human sympathy. Everything that he saw he loved. In that most beautiful stanza—perhaps the sweetest ever written—when the daisy is crushed to the ground and feels the damp and mould upon it, Burns, believing that there is a heart hid away somewhere in its petals, and imagining it perhaps had a remembrance of having been pushed to the earth before, and might therefore again spring into life and being, says :—

"Alas ! it's no thy neibor sweet,  
The bonnie lark, companion meet,

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Bending thee 'mang the dewy weat  
    Wi' spreckled breast !  
When upward-springing, blythe, to greet  
    The purpling east."

In that pathetic poem, "The Mousie,"—for what, after all, when we accomplish the most is it?—how tenderly he looks at the cosy home turned up by the ploughshare, and says :—

"That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,  
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble !  
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble."

What a picture in miniature of the long labour of so many lives ! Alas ! when it is all done there is but the little "heap o' stibble " that has caused us "mony a weary nibble." In that masterful poem "Man was made to mourn," how he expresses in burning words, "age and want,"

an ill-matched pair! Having never perhaps known the Greek word, but instinctively feeling the definition of "*anthropos*," up-looking, he says,— and it is the grandest definition of man that ever was uttered,—

"And man, whose heav'n-erected face  
The smiles of love adorn."

Where is there another definition so comprehensive? The only being that loves, and smiles, the only creature with heaven-uplifted face! You wonder that Burns was able to condense into such vivid language the suggestions gathered in the humble life of following the plough across the fields, conning the old songs as he laboured. Consider the man's life, and then you will wonder at the words, and the issue

of those words, their full meaning, and how they came warm from his heart. We love him for his humanity. Think also of his patriotism—that song, so eloquently sung this evening, with which he stirs the hearts and souls of Scotsmen everywhere,—

“Now’s the day, and now’s the hour ;  
See the front o’ battle lour.”

Just before I visited Ayr in 1870 I was in Paris. I left that city three or four days before the gates were closed. While there, the “Marseillaise Hymn” burst forth from the lips of that people. It had been forbidden by imperial edict for twenty years. It had been locked up lovingly and securely in the French heart, and when the Em-

peror was captured at Sedan, every one in France knew the Marseillaise. One evening, in the hotel, a man stepped up to the piano and played the soul-stirring song. From the farther end of the room came a Scotsman: he touched the key-board, and, fired with the same flush of patriotism, rendered "Scots, wha hae." There I heard these two grand airs put in comparison with each other, and do not think I was prejudiced in believing that there was more stirring music in "Scots, wha hae" than even in the inspiring strains of the "Marseillaise Hymn." I recalled the noble apostrophe in the "Cotter's Saturday Night"—

"O Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide  
That stream'd through Wallace's un-  
daunted heart,

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Who dar'd to nobly stem tyrannic pride,  
Or nobly die, the second glorious part :  
(The patriot's God peculiarly Thou art,  
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward !)  
O ! never, never, Scotia's realm desert ;  
But still the patriot and the patriot bard  
In bright succession raise, her ornament  
and guard ! ”

How he longed to do, and say, and  
write something for his country !—

“ E'en then, a wish (I mind its power),  
A wish that to my latest hour  
Shall strongly heave my breast,  
That I, for poor auld Scotland's sake,  
Some usefu' plan or book could make,  
Or sing a sang at least.”

He did it. His prayer was  
granted. He sang the song, and  
he made the book. All honour to  
his patriotism and abiding rever-  
ence ! When I come to this part  
of Burns' character, I see him stand  
in the very presence of the Infinite—



for, more than any other poet, Burns bared his heart to the great Creator of the universe ; presented himself bald and clear not only to those about him, but he laid his heart, as it were, open in everything. It is marvellous, and I feel what sincere honesty that man had with himself and his neighbours. He says—

“ God knows, I’m no’ the thing I shou’d be,  
Nor am I e’en the thing I cou’d be,  
But twenty times I rather wou’d be  
    An Atheist clean,  
Than under Gospel colours hid be  
    Just for a screen.”

Mark also the stanza—

“ All hail, religion ! maid divine !  
Pardon a muse sae mean as mine,  
Who in her rough imperfect line  
    Thus daurs to name thee ;  
To stigmatise false friends of thine  
    Can ne’er defame thee.”

That went straight to the heart of Scotland. There was no misunderstanding what it meant. He saw about him a world of hypocrisy and cant; he felt that there was much to be corrected, and he came to the front boldly to put in his protest. Look at the "Holy Fair." He saw how the Sacrament of the blessed Lord was being abused in many parts of Scotland, and he dared to put an eternal stab into the heart of hypocrisy, so that it can never live again with decency in the world. If Robert Burns had done no more than this, he would still have been the great hero of Scotland.

It is a serious thing for a man to turn aside from truth and duty. Burns knew it. He knew it better than any man that reviled him.

For his sins in life he sorely repented, and attempted to correct the evils that existed, the environment of all his sorrow. This is a point I am glad to touch on, for I have on my right our good friend Dr Dykes. I am not so well versed in theology as he is. I hope we are all Christians—we ought to be—and I believe Robert Burns at heart was. I do not know in the Providence of God why temptation should have so assailed that man, no more than any of us know the temptation that assailed the great Psalmist; but I do know this, that David never could have given such songs of praise to the world if he had never sinned and suffered. Robert Burns came to this world; he sinned; he repented; he told the

truth; he asked the Great Father to help him; and I believe, as the prayers of men are answered, that Robert Burns, from his fallen home in Dumfries, went straight to the heart of a Forgiving Parent. So much for Burns' treatment of hypocrisy. Now for his love.

Burns wrote the love-songs of the world. Why, his "Sweet Afton" flows by every girl's house that we adored when we were boys; his "Highland Mary" lifts every soul to a higher spiritual existence; his "Mary in Heaven" is the sweet regret of a heart that has survived its agony but tenderly cherished its sorrow. So all through Robert Burns' life we find he deifies by his song, as it were, every object that he touches. When we read

his verses we sometimes think he is in love with all the fair lassies of Scotland. But stop and take a look at his "Blue-eyed Lassie," and you will find the secret of the dramatic power of Burns. When Burns visited Lochmaben that lassie was twelve years old—in other words, he dramatised his situation, as in the case of the "Lass o' Ballochmyle." I believe he never came within half a mile of her. He put dramatic element into song.

Burns did for the songs of Scotland exactly what Shakespeare did for the drama of England. Shakespeare saw these old dramas disjointed; he found them all barns, and left them all palaces. Burns did just this with the songs of

Scotland. You know better than I how carefully he remodelled and reformed them; and—tell me if this is not an eternal argument for the purity of Burns' heart—he left every song purer than he found it. It speaks volumes for the character of Burns that he weeded the filth out of the old ballads. What else did Burns accomplish? The very next poem he wrote after the "Cotter's Saturday Night" was his "Address to the Deil," and he lifted that sort of a "deil" not only out of Scotland, but out of the world for ever. His humanity here also ran over. I think if there is a verse to-day that gives the world a powerful and practical idea of repentance it is this—

“An’ now, auld ‘Cloots,’ I ken ye’re thinkin’  
A certain bardie’s rantin’, drinkin’,  
Some luckless hour will send him linkin’  
To your black pit;  
But, faith! he’ll turn a corner jinkin’,  
An’ cheat you yet.”

I know no better or briefer advice than to “turn a corner jinkin’.” If the people in Scotland and Massachusetts in the seventeenth century had found a poet to have taught them in as forcible language as Burns the same idea, there would have been less misery in Edinburgh and Salem. The last witch in the world lies buried in the small dell opposite old Alloway Kirk, by the bridge of Doon. How Burns turned back to this country of his which he left when a boy! It was here he found “The Cotter’s Saturday Night” — the most graphic

Christian drama ever presented in words—and the weird story of “Tam o’ Shanter.” Is it not remarkable that the man should have put into antipodes, as it were, these two buildings right here by Bonnie Doon? Again—and this is a vital thing—Burns came to make Scotland think more of herself than she ever did before. Scotland did not know her own greatness until Burns came and sang the songs that introduced her to herself. There was a tendency towards French philosophy; and the grand old Doric expression of Scottish song was about to be lost for ever, when the master-singer came to put that Doric into lines that will live as long as language endures.

There has been in the news-



papers lately unnecessary comparison as to which was the greater poet or writer, Walter Scott or Robert Burns. I think, my friends, it is like trying to tell which is better looking, a lady with black eyes or a lady with blue eyes. But I do say this: while Walter Scott has clothed with romance the hillsides of Scotland, and made more real than history the events he depicts from his fancy, Robert Burns by his intense personality has hallowed also every rood of ground where his foot has trod and every stream where his fancy has played. More than this, Robert Burns taught the world the great principle of reciprocity. He has reared a grander and a more enduring structure than even Sir William Arrol. He has swung

a choral bridge of poetry across the Atlantic, the Pacific, and the Indian Ocean, so that the world to-day is bound together by the cords of one man, the genius of your town of Ayr. But I must not intrude longer on your patience. My heart is warm towards the literature of Scotland. I spoke of Burns and Scott being placed in contrast. Rather put into comparison — if we must compare anybody—Shakespeare and Robert Burns. For intensity of feeling read side by side Shakespeare's sentences with those of Robert Burns, and see whether the peasant ploughman does not often "bear the gree." Take Shakespeare's

" But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,  
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern  
hill "—

then note the personification of sweetness in Burns'

“There Simmer first unfold her robes,  
And there the langest tarry.”

Take Shakespeare's well-known passage in “A Midsummer Night's Dream,” where he speaks of the lightning,

“The jaws of darkness do devour it up,”

and Burns' expression of the same idea in “Tam o' Shanter”—

“The speedy gleams the darkness swallows.”

Tell me which is greatest? Burns always went to the heart of things. How powerful this stanza, which flows straight from his inmost being :—

“The sacred lowe o' weel-plac'd love,  
Luxuriantly indulge it ;  
But never tempt th' illicit rove,  
Tho' naething should divulge it :

I wave the quantum o' the sin,  
The hazard of concealing ;  
But, och ! it hardens a' within,  
And petrifies the feeling ! ”

I stand here to-night in wonder  
at the man so reared, so surrounded.  
He had to break the bond of his  
environment. I see him along  
your road, on his way to Mount  
Oliphant when a boy, at Mossgiel,  
when he goes down to have a talk  
with Gavin Hamilton, then the first  
attempt at authorship, and that Kil-  
marnock edition, a book which  
startled the world and startles it  
still. Robert Burns, I bow before  
thee in reverence ! Thou art a man  
who came to speak more directly  
than any other in the world's history  
straight out of thine own heart to the  
heart of thy toiling brethren. Ah !

yes, we are proud, and have a right to be, of the "lad that was born in Kyle." "A man's a man for a' that" was the coming prophecy of the great brotherhood of the world, and it is to-day the tie of our social life, the very bond of fraternity which Robert Burns so well expressed. I do not think that Wordsworth could have written so sweetly, I do not believe Carlyle could have hated the wrong so thoroughly, if your poet had not lived.

I come to you from the country across the sea to speak of the love we have for Burns—for he is our national poet also: he is the one man who expresses the glow and fervour and enthusiasm of our people there. "Will you go to the Indies, my

Mary?" has been singularly and happily answered. What a beautiful forecast of his own poetic destiny! How his lines to Mary and Bonnie Jean outspeed the morning, and float on wings of music beyond "the farthest Ind"! He is indeed the bard of Scotland, the skylark poet of Britain, the prophet of America, with ringing words of freedom and manhood! Could he have had a vision as he lay upon his dying bed that, before one hundred years went by, the narrow fringe of colonial civilisation would expand to seventy millions, speaking one common language; and also foreseen that although the world might widen it would not outgrow his song,—how it would have cheered his heart! Did not the vision pass before him,

for he was conscious of the power that slumbered in him? I believe it did. And now, to-night, the world comes together to give the Memory of Robert Burns, which I ask you to pledge in solemn silence.

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# The Ettrick Shepherd

Poet-Laureate

Lodge Canongate Kilwinning



*This poem on the Ettrick Shepherd was written at the request of Lodge Canongate Kilwinning, on my return from a trip up the Yarrow to St Mary's Loch. Tibbie Shiel's Inn was all the dearer to me as Poet-Laureate of Lodge Canongate Kilwinning, because here foregathered on many a night James Hogg and Christopher North, poetic links connecting the present and the past.*



AIL, Canongate Kilwinning,  
hail

Your Laureate bard frae  
Ettrick dale!

Pledge lang and deep wi' three times three  
The chief of fairy minstrelsie!

Wi' shepherd plaid o'er shoulder thrown,  
Erect, though sixty years have flown!  
Gie us your hand and hang your crook  
Right here within the organ's nook.

Wi' ruddy cheek as when of old  
Foregathering at the "Noctes" fold!  
And see! that e'e o' dancing glee  
Proclaims a "night" that bears the gree.

Kit North, forsooth, or Aytoun there  
Will tak' again the honoured chair ;  
Spread wide the board ! " Ambrosian "  
    food  
Shall grace the bard of Holyrood.

We call wi' pride each storied name,—  
The sacred beadroll of our fame ;  
Come one and all ; we'll hae a " wake "  
To make the old Tron steeple shake.

Don't startle at the Tyler's knock,  
You're safe as at St Mary's Loch ;—  
You mind when first you saw the light  
And gazed upon yon legend bright ;—

And when we had you " rigged " at last,  
Wi' " baubles " all behind you cast,  
You said before the " work " began :—  
" Noo, mind, lads, I'm a married man."

Dear Jamie Hogg, you couldna said  
A funnier thing since you were wed ;



*The Ettrick Shepherd.* 117

Those words throughout all Scotland  
went,—  
And masons wondered what you meant.

But let it pass. The days are lang  
Since we have heard the Shepherd's sang;  
The richest folds at Altrive yet  
Are fleecy clouds in purple set.

Bright glorious days among the hills!  
Thy books a thousand dancing rills!  
Brave nights of mirth as genius speels  
And "tak's the road" to Tibbie Shiel's.

Where old-time song and jest went round,  
And rafters rang with merry sound;  
All silent now! Nay! fair and free  
Swells forth the Border Minstrelsie.

---

So, gie us a ballad again to-night ;—  
How witches flew o'er the sea-foam white ;  
Your midnight ride with the " Witch of  
Fife,"

A buxom dame and a sonsie wife :

Who led her " gudeman " many a mile  
To the Bishop's casks of Merry Carlisle ;  
And left him there until rosy morn  
Found him asleep wi' an empty horn.

" A modest tale, by my fay," said North,  
" It beats the ' Brig ' across the Forth,  
On a flying stick to skirl away,  
Like comets lost in the morning grey.

It makes one think that the ' Lion ' there  
May drink some day of Loch Katrine  
fair,

Springing away from the solid ground  
To the hills of Fife wi' a single bound.

Perchance upborne on loftier flight,  
Till yonder Craggs are bathed in light,

Or bright Orion's race is run,  
We'll join the 'Pilgrims of the Sun.'

"Well said, Kit North, your wit is fine,  
Suppose you suggest a shorter line;  
If Jamie once gets under way,  
He'll never ken the blink o' day.

We'll join his 'Pilgrims of the Sun'  
When we our mortal race have run;"—  
Thus Aytoun spoke, and Lockhart smiled  
To find the "Sun" securely "tiled."

Then Boswell thought his good "Queen  
Hynde"  
Might hae a chance to free her mind;  
But Willie Hay set all ableeze:—  
"Too near your trip to the 'Hebrides.'"

All took a part till Jamie turns  
Wi' twinkling eye to Robbie Burns:  
"Perhaps they want a photograph  
That didn't make the 'critics' laugh.

All in 'Poetic Mirror' there,  
The very garb they used to wear ;—  
Byron and Wordsworth, Southey, Scott,  
At home within a shepherd's cot."

---

"Ay," answered Burns, "but the cot is  
wide  
That shelters the fairies of Ettrick side ;—  
And grander than castle its but and ben,  
Where 'Bonnie Kilmeny gaed up the  
glen.'

No foot of earth but a standing-place  
Yet the poet's eye has heaven for space,  
And a fairy realm where thought is free,  
And 'Kilmeny was pure as pure could  
be.'

And this was her home, and this is thine,  
As the years their threads of glory un-  
twine ;

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For the vale she beheld is the Yarrow  
still,  
And the music she heard the tinkling rill ;

And the sky she noted of thousand dyes  
The morning that broke on the Shepherd's eyes,  
And the land of 'lakes and mountains  
grey'  
That soft in vision before her lay,

Was an open book where the poet wrought  
A wondrous realm, a realm of thought—  
A world so pure, with voices clear  
'Kilmeny' and he alone might hear.

Immortal with her the poet dwells  
In Ettrick's and Yarrow's dowie dells,  
'Till the stars of heaven fall calmly away  
Like flakes of snaw on a winter day.'"

---



So spake the lad frae bonnie Ayr :  
"Kilmeny !" "Kilmeny !" was echoed  
there,  
As the Shepherd rose to the hearty call,  
And bound all hearts in loving thrall.

The golden hours are wellnigh flown,  
But gie us a song that girds every zone,  
Each "valley and glen and dell without  
name :"—  
"To woo a bonnie lassie when the kye  
comes hame."

Ay, that is the human, my brother, you  
see,  
"Kilmeny" is sweet, but the "lassie" for  
me ;  
Your "Bird of the wilderness," brightest  
e'er born,  
"Blithesome and cumberless," wakens the  
morn ;

Immortal while Yarrow wi' melody wide  
Bestows on the Ettrick its silvery tide ;

*The Ettrick Shepherd.*    123

While Ettrick flows on to the Tweed and  
the sea  
That "Skylark" shall wake distant mea-  
dow and lea ;

O'er far-away mountains its music is  
borne  
To desolate hearts aweary and worn ;  
To meadows and streams where the wan-  
derer turns  
And dreams for a moment of Scotia's  
burns.

Immortal! Ah yes, the "Skylark" I  
know ;  
Immortal "Kilmeny," with heart pure  
as snow ;  
But teach me, said Kit, what is dearer  
than fame,—  
"To woo a bonnie lassie when the kye  
comes hame."

A brave lesson, Jamie, we know it by  
heart,  
But gie us another, for brothers must  
part;  
Ay, teach us but this, for the east is  
afame,  
To win a hearty welcome when we a' get  
hame.

# Landmarks of Scott

*To present in the brief compass of an hour a comprehensive survey of Walter Scott's novels and poems; to show the relation of these works, chronologically arranged, to history; to inspire the rising generation with love for the Great Magician—not by critical notes, but rather by enthusiastic appreciation—is the object of this lecture. What a marvellous panorama of eight centuries, from Richard Cœur de Lion to Napoleon! What a wonderful story of sixty-one years, from Edinburgh to Dryburgh Abbey!*





ETWEEN the old and new towns of the city of Edinburgh, in East Princes Street Garden, stands a monument, at once national and individual in its character—the pride of Scotland, and the finest ever reared to Genius. Underneath its arched canopy is a statue—the author of ‘Marmion’ and ‘Waverley,’ wrapped in a shepherd’s plaid, with book in hand, and his favourite dog Maida at his feet; and the Gothic tower, perfect in proportion, full of the architectural beauties



of Melrose Abbey, rises two hundred feet above the most picturesque street of the most picturesque city in Europe.

Standing with me in this garden, at the base of this monument, let us go over some of the good gifts which crown this city, "the Northern Queen." There is Calton Hill, with its monuments to Dugald Stewart, to David Hume, to Nelson, to Playfair, and the classic pillars of the unfinished Parthenon, in memory of those who fell at Waterloo ; and there is High Street, almost tottering with garret piled upon garret, rising nine and ten storeys above that rocky ridge which reaches from old Holyrood Palace past the Canon-gate, with its solemn recollections of departed grandeur ; past the Tol-

booth, with its quaint architecture of the sixteenth century; past the Church of St Giles—the old patron saint of the city—whose crowned spire looks down upon a heart wrought in the pavement, marking the site of the Heart of Mid-Lothian; past the West Bow leading to the Grassmarket, where the proud and the humble alike have suffered; and along the Esplanade to the Castle, whose moss-grown battlements, four hundred feet above the sea, stand by day a grand landmark of the past, with grey walls that, bathed in moonlight, seem to guard an enchanted city. While directly opposite, rising from the valley of Holyrood, are the Salisbury Crags, a high belt of semi-circular rocks, where King Arthur of the Round Table, the spotless knight



of English story, is said to have defeated the Saxons near the close of the sixth century; and, beyond and above these, Arthur's Seat, eight hundred and twenty-two feet in height, resembling in form a massive lion, as if nature, anticipating the heraldry of Scotland and the site of her capital, had wrought from that porphyry rock her royal insignia, and placed there as an eternal guardian the lion-sentinel of the nation.

In the midst of this blended history and beauty, it was indeed fitting for a nation to testify her gratitude to him who has made her history a romance, and her romance a history; while subscriptions from every class, from the £100 of her Majesty the Queen to the £3, 7s. of the poor people of the Cowgate,

will ever prove that its foundation is more lasting than granite, and verify that Pompeii-like inscription, written by Lord Jeffrey some fifty - three years ago, placed under its cornerstone. The inscription reads as follows :—

This graven plate, deposited at the base of a votive building on the fifteenth day of August in the year of Christ 1840, and never likely to see the light again till all the surrounding structures are crumbled to dust by the decay of time, or by human or elemental violence, may then testify to a distant posterity that his countrymen began on that day to raise an effigy and architectural monument

*To the Memory of*

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.,

whose admirable writings were then allowed to have given more delight and suggested better feeling to a larger class of readers in every rank of society than those of any other author, with the exception of Shakespeare alone, and which were therefore thought likely to be remembered

long after this act of gratitude on the part of the first generation of his admirers should be forgotten.

HE WAS BORN

AT EDINBURGH, 15TH AUGUST 1771 ;

AND DIED

AT ABBOTSFORD, 21ST SEPTEMBER 1832.

This beautiful tribute from the accomplished lawyer and critic of the nineteenth century breathes the spirit of the famous New Zealander passage of Macaulay :—

“When civilisation and knowledge shall have fixed their abode in distant continents ; when the sceptre shall have passed away from England ; when, perhaps, some traveller from New Zealand shall in vain labour to decipher on some mouldering pedestal the name of our proudest chief, shall see a single naked fisherman wash his nets in the river of ten thousand masts, and, in the midst

of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St Paul."

Whether the idea shadowed in these passages of Jeffrey and Macaulay is correct, that civilisation, travelling from continent to continent, — journeying like the wise men of old from the east to the west, — led forward by the star of hope and progress, will leave prosperous cities, to-day guarded by Christian institutions, like wrecks upon the shore of an ebbing tide, it might be too curious here to consider; nevertheless the sentiment of this inscription is true, that if the day ever should come when all the structures that surround this monument are with it crumbled to dust, whether by the decay of time

or by human or elemental violence—if Edinburgh, the royal home of a line of sovereigns whose descendants are to-day upon the thrones of Europe, were left desolate, ay, without one stone upon another—the name of Walter Scott would span the centuries and live in memory long after the act here recorded was forgotten.

And it was not only fitting that this memorial monument should stand the central and crowning ornament of his native city, but it was especially fitting that it should stand between the Old Town and the New; for Walter Scott stands emphatically between the old and the new—the man who more than any other has connected the past with the present, retenanted the

days gone by, and breathed life and value into old traditions. He lived not only in the Border country of Britain, but in the Border age of history, and he came just in time to rescue the romance of feudal life. It was an age of rapid transition. The steam-engine was illustrating the story of that wonderful Arabian carpet which transported the traveller from place to place as it were by magic. The blood of Louis XVI., still fresh upon the scaffold, was another argument against the divine right of kings. Europe was full of bayonets and ideas.

In the midst of this new life, this new awakening, the traditions of a storied past were being forgotten, until the minstrel and the magician, wandering among the by-

places of his ancient Caledon, found  
that

“Harp of the North, which mouldering long  
    had hung  
    On the witch elm that shades St Fillan's  
        spring,  
And down the breeze its mournful numbers  
    flung,  
Till envious ivy did around it cling,  
Muffling with verdant ringlets every  
    string.”

He unbound from the strings that  
ivy which had for years muffled its  
music. His appeal to “wake once  
more” was answered by the ‘Lay  
of the Last Minstrel,’ ‘Marmion,’  
and the ‘Lady of the Lake’; and  
while mountains and lochs were yet  
listening to the echoes, the minstrel  
said farewell to the Muse to become  
the author of ‘Waverley’—the Great  
Unknown.

As if written with an enchanted pen these romances followed each other in quick succession, in line unbroken and endless as the descendants of Banquo rising from the witches' caldron; or rather each work seems only an introduction to another, like the characters in the rhyme of the "House that Jack Built." First, 'Waverley;' second, 'Guy Mannering;' third, 'Antiquary;' fourth, 'Rob Roy;' seventh, 'Heart of Mid-Lothian;' tenth, 'Ivanhoe;' thirteenth, 'Kenilworth,' &c.

Laying aside his minor romances, both in prose and in verse, his innumerable histories, essays, and compilations, we have in what are termed his twenty-six "Waverley Novels," and his five great poems, a living and connected history of



Europe from the close of the eleventh century to the very commencement of our own; from the time when Peter the Hermit moved all Europe with a common sentiment—the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the Saracens—down to a time, within the memory of men still living, when Napoleon the Great shook all Europe with a different feeling, played at football with the crowns of kings, and placed upon his head with his own hands the iron crown of Lombardy—a crown made sacred by a little band of iron said to have been made from one of the four nails of the cross of Calvary.

Let any one, therefore, arrange these works in their historic order, not their order as written but their

order as related to history, and read with care, and there will be stamped upon the memory not only the main events of seven centuries, but also that which is equally valuable, and that which histories rarely furnish—the habits, the costumes, the customs of society ; in a word, the everyday life of our ancestors. In this hasty excursion through many lands and long centuries, we are compelled to pass rapidly over moonlight scenes and “Romeo and Juliet” soliloquies, taking it for granted, in the expressive lines of Jean Ingelow—

“To marriage all the stories flow,  
And finish there ;  
As if with marriage came the end,  
The entrance into settled rest ;  
The calm to which love’s tossings tend—  
The quiet breast.”

We trust the absence of this tender sentiment will not be regretted by any friends or cousins of that confectionery - aged young lady — she lived, I believe, just in the maple-sugar edge of New York and Massachusetts—who, about to be married, insisted on having a certain clergyman perform the ceremony, saying, “He always throws so much feeling into it, and I wouldn’t give a fig to be married unless it could be done in a style of gushing rhapsody.” Seven centuries are too much for gushing rhapsody; therefore, like the successful wooer of Miss Flora M’Flimsey,

“Without any romance, or raptures, or sighs,  
But like one of the quietest business transactions,”

we will proceed with our brief digest

of seven hundred years, which you may consider, if you will, an historical parenthesis of about ten minutes.

In the Tales of the Crusaders: 'Count Robert of Paris,' 'The Betrothed,' 'The Talisman,' and 'Ivanhoe,' we have pictures of feudal life, embracing almost a century, from the year 1096 to 1194, and also that great uprising, "the first heroic event of modern Europe," when the northern and western races, emerging from barbarism into the pure light of Christianity, "laid aside, for the time, their local animosities" and united under the expected favour of heaven in opposing the Cross to the Crescent—the Bible to the Koran. In the East we see Palestine in her desolation, the gates of Jerusalem guarded by strangers, her shrines

and temples in the hands of infidels. Around the walls of Acre we hear the cry of the sentinel, "Remember the Holy Sepulchre;" and under the clear glancing stars which rise on Bethlehem still speaking their nightly message, "Peace on earth, good-will to men," we hear in strange discord the battle-shout of the Lion-hearted Richard Plantagenet, "St George for Merrie England!"

We see Constantinople in her glory—a proud city which for eight hundred years, ever since the days of the great Constantine, had plundered the world of statues and pictures and works of art—a city literally roofed with flowers and terraced gardens, full of triumphal arches and stately buildings, in marked contrast with the rude huts and massive

strongholds of the Frank, the Norman, and the Saxon. On the one hand, civilisation sinking into barbarism—the civilisation of a great Roman empire; on the other, barbarism rising into civilisation—the barbarism of northern Europe moving toward the civilisation of to-day.

In 'Ivanhoe,' in the halls of Cedric of Rotherwood, we are introduced to those Saxon families who retained their pride long after they had lost their country—a conquered race which, nevertheless, "led captivity captive" in preserving the straightforward Anglo-Saxon as the foundation of a language which, in its development, even from Chaucer to Shakespeare, rivals the literature of Greece. At Ashby de la Zouche we are surrounded by sloping gal-

leries crowded to overflowing to witness the most renowned tournament ever held within the four seas that girth Britain.

We see society everywhere disorganised and unprotected, when Sherwood Forest was the kingdom of Robin Hood and his brave outlaws, whose deeds, so popular in English song, were honourable compared with the insolence of the haughty Normans, who, in their pride of conquest, "acknowledged no law but their own wicked passions; when matrons and maidens of noble families assumed the veil and took shelter in convents, not as called thither by the vocation of God, but solely to preserve their honour from the unbridled licence of man; when even the Princess

Matilda, daughter of a king of Scotland and afterwards the wife and mother of monarchs, was obliged during her early residence for education in England to assume the veil of a nun, as the only means of escaping the unbridled pursuit of the Norman nobles." In a word, we have in these tales not only a picture of those romantic days when "Beauty dealt the prize which Valour won," but also a truer knowledge of those iron-hearted times when every sword bore for its motto, "This is my charter!"

In 'Castle Dangerous,' year 1307, we are introduced to the vale of Douglas—the fair and storied land Scott loved so well; and the same year, in the 'Lord of the Isles,' we see the good King Robert led for-



ward by high destiny, through long wandering and sore privation, to that great battle which was not only to restore his throne and the independence of his country, but also to convert the name of a little stream—the Bannockburn—into one of the watchwords of liberty, and associate it for all coming time with the names of Marathon and Thermopylæ.

In that night of lovely June the armies are assembled on the plain. From the one hundred thousand English soldiers come shouts of revelry; from the thirty thousand soldiers of Scotland rises the murmured prayer—the early mass.

“There numbers had presumption given,  
Here hands o’ermatched sought aid from  
heaven.”

And now, on the Ochils and the

grey walls of Stirling, gleams the morning sun ; the trumpet - sound swells up the hillside. The lines are drawn up in battle array. But hark ! there is a hush before the battle. With sunk banner, spear, and shield, the Scottish hosts kneel with uplifted hands. " See ! " says King Edward, " the rebels repent. " " Ay, " answered his faithful Argentine,

" But they bend to other powers,  
And other pardon seek than ours ;  
Upon the spot where they have kneeled  
These men will die or win the field. "

When the sun went down that night Scotland had purchased her liberty and sealed the indenture with the blood of her enemies. From this description of King Robert's triumph we are carried forward one hundred

years to the days of his grandson, King Robert the Third, and, in the 'Fair Maid of Perth' (1402), we see the old capital of the kingdom on the clear-flowing Tay, with its two broad inches, or meadows. We see the customs of St Valentine's Day as they were observed centuries ago, the bloody combat between two Highland clans, and the famous trial by bier-right in the Gothic church of St John.

In 'Quentin Durward' we are taken across the Channel to sunny France, to the court of Louis XI., that whited sepulchre of princes. At this time Europe was full of commotion. Switzerland was asserting that liberty which she afterwards so bravely defended. England was struggling in the Wars

of the Roses, and Louis was in arms, as usual, with his cousin, Charles of Burgundy, whom we see, four years later, in 'Anne of Geierstein,' the romance of Switzerland, laid in the very centre of that romantic country where mountain-walled Geneva was awaiting the spirit of Calvin; Chillon, with its worn pavements, waiting the genius of Byron, and the land of Tell, the verse of Schiller. We are introduced to the judges of that secret and unmerciful tribunal, the Vehmic Court, which, like an immense Dionysian ear, heard every whisper in Westphalia, and by its bloody executions gave to the east of Germany the name of the "red land."

The times were indeed unsettled, but the light was breaking, the

morning of Europe was at hand. The martyrdom of John Huss was paving the way for the Reformation of Luther. Maritime commerce was giving birth to new and populous cities. Painting in oil was invented, and Italy filled with masterpieces of art. Coster, Gutenberg, and Caxton were introducing the art of printing with blocks and movable type at Haarlem, Mentz, and London. Vasco da Gama had found a new passage to India by way of the Cape of Good Hope. The compass had widened the horizon of navigation, and at the wealthy court of Ferdinand and Isabella, Columbus was pleading in behalf of a new world.

But the ringing lines of 'Marmion' call us back to bonnie Scot-

land, to Norham Castle on the  
Tweed, to Crichton on the Tyne,  
to Tantallon by the sea, and the  
fatal field of Flodden,

“Where shivered was fair Scotland’s spear,  
And broken was her shield.”

Fifty years later the ‘Lay of the  
Last Minstrel’ reveals the stirring  
manners of feudal life in a Border  
stronghold and the customs of  
Branksome Hall, where “eternal  
vigilance” was indeed “the price  
of liberty,” for

“They carved at the meal  
With gloves of steel,  
And they drank the red wine through the  
helmet barred.”

The ‘Lady of the Lake’ of the  
same year pictures the southern  
Highlands, the summoning of the

clans by the fiery cross, the exiled Douglas, the adventures of James Fitz-James and his well-known conflict with Roderick Dhu. Passing over the 'Monastery,' the scene of which is laid in the stormy times of the Reformation, and the 'Abbot,' connected with Loch Leven Castle, place of Queen Mary's captivity, we come to 'Kenilworth' (1575), where we get a full-length portrait of her sisterly cousin, or rather her cousinly sister, the virgin Queen Elizabeth. At the castle of the proud Leicester the clocks for six days point to the hour of noon, indicating one continued banquet. We see the court of England in its highest glory: Sir Walter Raleigh, soldier, poet, and discoverer, winning the notice of the queen by laying

his cloak in the mire to save her Majesty's slippers ; Sir Philip Sidney, the courtly scholar and accomplished statesman, said to have suggested that line in Hamlet—

“The glass of fashion, and the mould of form ;”

Sir Francis Drake, the great voyager ; Spenser, who had found a new realm of poetry rich as Arabian story ; Francis Bacon, about to work his reform in philosophy ; and, dimly mingling with the group, a man whose history is comprised in a parenthesis, who has left the world a few scattered autographs, and something more—William Shakespeare.

In the ‘Fortunes of Nigel’ we see the London of James I., a king who possessed knowledge without



wisdom, and was everywhere known as the wisest fool in Christendom. We see the Strand, with here and there a traveller on his way from the City to Westminster, along which to-day pours the full tide of London population; the palace of Whitehall, almost completed, through a window of which his son, Charles I., was to mount the scaffold; the Tower, with a sad history already written upon its walls, and the block where Lady Jane Grey was beheaded.

'Rokeby' (1644) takes us to the scenery near Greta Bridge in Yorkshire, and the days which immediately succeeded the battle of Marston Moor, where Charles I. learned, by bitter experience, what it was to fight with men who, although

undisciplined and stigmatised as Roundheads and Puritans, went into battle shouting, "The Lord of hosts! The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon!"—men related in faith and practice to those who, twenty-four years before, one wintry day on the bleak coast of a shrouded continent, signed in the Mayflower's cabin that New England charter which made Plymouth Rock "the corner-stone" of a nation.

The 'Legend of Montrose,' the following year (1645), shows the state of Scotland during the great civil war; and 'Woodstock' (between 1652 and 1660) takes us to one of the grand old parks of England, near the classic city of Oxford. Here, beneath those large oaks, older than the Magna Charta of

King John, we drink from the well of the fair Rosamond, near which Chaucer, in the fourteenth century, found another well, pure as the morning dew, in which the Muse of Poetry had lost her jewels—the well of English undefiled. We see Oliver Cromwell, in the days of the Commonwealth, raising Britain to the rank of a first power in Europe, called to the front by the necessities of the times, even as we have seen men in our own great civil conflict delegated by Providence to bear aloft the banner of liberty or to guide the pen which writes the emancipation of a race.

In 1658 Cromwell dies; his son Richard rules for eight months; and in 'Peveril of the Peak' we see the same crowd which hooted the father

on the scaffold, cheering the son, Charles II., on his way to his ancestral palace. We see Milton, blind, to whom night came early only to reveal the stars, an exile in his native city, his books burned by order of the English House of Commons, and his "Paradise Lost" sold for less than the cost of the paper on which it was written.

In 'Old Mortality'—which Coleridge associates with 'Guy Mannerling' as the best of the series—we meet the Scotch Covenanters, heroes of the Kirk, who had "uplifted its banner upon the mountains, who made the rocks their altars, and the sky their sanctuary," who signed the bond of their belief with blood taken from their arms, and defended it with blood from their hearts,—men

who believed that heaven itself would fight for them, even as the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.

In the 'Pirate' we have many superstitions handed down from Scandinavia, the mother of modern Europe, nursery of a race—

"Stern to inflict and stubborn to endure"—

whose raven banner floated for long centuries the terror of the seas. Of the same year we read the tragedy of the 'Bride of Lammermoor,' often styled a poem in prose. Eight years later the 'Black Dwarf' appears, connected with the history of the Pretender, or the exiled Stuart. The second attempt, or the affair of 1715, is seen in 'Rob

Roy,' the Robin Hood of Scotland, the dread of the wealthy and the friend of the poor. Next comes the 'Heart of Mid-Lothian,' the household story of Scotland and the world—the story of Jeanie and Effie Deans during the time of the Edinburgh riot 1736.

In 'Waverley' Scott leads us through the romantic portion of the Highlands, following the adventures of Prince Charlie in the affair of 1745. In 'Guy Mannering' we have a picture of the southern coast of Scotland, with its smugglers and gipsies. 'Redgauntlet' shows the Pretender grown old, and far less attractive, making a final attempt for the throne of Britain. The 'Antiquary' (1798) takes us to the eastern coast a little north of

bonnie Dundee ; and ' Saint Ronan's Well ' brings us to the very commencement of our own century, and the vicinity of Ashestiel, where Scott passed those eight happy years of his life between 1804 and 1812.

In this glance at the different ages of Europe since the days of the Crusades, we are enabled to take in at once the great field of history where Scott has laboured, and we find that each work stands out the index of some particular period. In every country, from the eastern shore of the almost tideless Mediterranean to the stormy islands of the northern seas, we find something that speaks of his genius : castles mouldering into ruin, abbeys and cathedrals covered with ivy, lakes with poetic islands, mountains

clothed in clouds and sunlight, hills purpled with heather, as if "the earth would not forget the blood shed in behalf of liberty," heaths wild and rugged where Christianity found sanctuary; Melrose Abbey, Abbotsford, Loch Katrine, the Trosachs, Kenilworth (where shall we stop the enumeration?)—all are the landmarks of Walter Scott; and, when I stood upon the hills which overlook the Tweed, winding through its storied country, past Abbotsford and Dryburgh, with fair Melrose lying midway between them, the centre of a rich landscape, it seemed as if the very earth from horizon to horizon was mantled with his poetry, and that there was no other spot in the world so closely associated with the genius of any man.



Abbotsford has been truly styled a romance in stone. Scott used to say it was one of his air-castles which he had reduced to solid stone and mortar. At every turn something speaks of the poet, the historian, and the antiquarian: in the courtyard wall, large carved medallions from the old cross of Edinburgh; near the main entrance the door of the Tolbooth, surmounted by the words,

"THE LORD OF ARMIES IS MY PROTECTOR;  
BLESSED ARE THEY THAT TRUST IN THE LORD.  
1575;"

around the walls, the heraldry of the Border clans, and carved wainscoting from the kirk of Dunfermline; on the cornices, casts of foliage and flowers modelled after those at Melrose and Roslin; here, the key

of the Heart of Mid-Lothian, and the gun of Rob Roy, with initials of Robert Macgregor; here, the armour of ancient knights, long ago buried and forgotten,—the spear, the shield, the helmet, the vizor, the breastplate, the target, the claymore, and the battle-axe,—telling of generations stronger than ours; here, a richer armoury, whose knights are not forgotten—a library of twenty thousand volumes, sentinelled by the bust of Shakespeare.

On the one side, a bay-window looks out upon the Tweed, and, on the other, opens into a little study, with a writing-table and a vacant chair. It is indeed the most wonderful romance of his creation, and there is no baronial hall or lordly castle in Britain possessing half its

interest. At the time of its building Washington Irving paid Scott a visit, and has given a beautiful tribute to his genius and hospitality. He says :—

“Day after day we wandered about in almost constant, joyous, and familiar conversation. Every night I retired with my mind filled with delightful recollections of the day, and every morning I rose with the certainty of new enjoyment. It was as if I were admitted to a social communion with Shakespeare, for it was with one of a kindred if not equal genius. The days thus spent I shall ever look back upon as among the very happiest of my life” (mark his definition of happiness), “for I was conscious at the time of being happy. One morning our ramble took us on the hills, commanding an extensive prospect. ‘Now,’ said Scott, ‘I have brought you, like the pilgrim in the “Pilgrim’s Progress,” to the top of the

Delectable Mountains, that I may show you all the goodly regions hereabouts. Yonder is Lammermuir and Smailholme, and there you have Galashiels, and Torwoodlee, and Gala Water. In that direction you see Teviotdale and the Braes of Yarrow, and Ettrick stream winding along like a silver thread to throw itself into the Tweed.' Every turn brought to mind some household air, some almost forgotten song of the nursery, by which I had been lulled to sleep in my childhood, and with them the looks and voices of those who had sung them and were now no more."

In this realm of romance, nature had indeed spread a bountiful table, and the Tweed and the Trosachs, in the genius of Scott, were entertaining the Hudson and the Catskills, in the genius of Irving.

At Melrose, Irving met the old sexton and custodian of the Abbey,

and was much amused by his accuracy and enthusiasm. He believed in sticking closely to the text of the poem, and called Irving's attention to the slender shafts of the eastern window, so delicately carved with foliated tracery, as if

"some fairy's hand  
'Twixt poplars straight the osier wand  
In many a freakish knot had twined ;  
Then framed a spell, when the work was done,  
And changed the willow-wreaths to stone."

He also pointed out the identical block on which William of Deloraine and the monk were seated that memorable night when the wizard's book was taken from the grave ; but there was one passage which perplexed him sadly, the familiar opening of the second canto :—

“ If thou wouldst view fair Melrose aright,  
Go visit it by the pale moonlight ;  
For the gay beams of lightsome day  
Gild but to flout the ruins grey.”

“ In consequence of this admonition many of the most devout pilgrims to the ruin could not be contented with a daylight inspection, and insisted it could be nothing unless seen by the light of the moon. Now, unfortunately, the moon shines but for a part of the month, and, what is still more unfortunate, is very apt, in Scotland, to be obscured by clouds and mists. The old sexton was therefore sorely puzzled how to accommodate his poetry-struck visitors with this indispensable moonshine. At length, in a lucky moment, he devised a substitute. It was a great double tallow candle stuck upon the end of a pole, which he soon thought preferable to the moon itself. ‘ It doesna light up a’ the Abbey at ance, to be sure,’ he would say ; ‘ but then you can shift it about and show the auld ruin bit by bit, while the moon shines only on one side.’ ”

It is not often that a writer, by mere romance and fiction, is able during his life to invest a place with living and actual interest; but Scott had no sooner published the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel' than Melrose became a new shrine of pilgrimage. It had always been considered a beautiful monument and a magnificent outpost of the early Church. It had been visited for years by the antiquarian and the architect, and here and there a student of history remembered the name of its founder; but "when Scott hung upon its ruined arches the flowers of poesy, and the light bursting from the wizard's grave

'Streamed upward to the chancel roof,  
And through the galleries far aloof,'"

it was at once invested with interest kindred to that of the Coliseum or the Acropolis.

Throughout the whole poem we see Scott's faculty for intense localisation — the same power which has invested Loch Katrine and the Trosachs with so great interest. We may have lakes in Italy, Switzerland, or the United States, as beautiful: Como, Lucerne, Lake George, Tahoe, or some of the lakes of the Adirondacks, — but there is no scenery in the world so real in its romance as this little lake of the Scottish Highlands, only nine miles long. How many know by heart the names of the mountains that guard it round — Ben Ledi, Ben Venue, and Ben-an! We have seen them in waking dreams ever



since our earliest childhood, touched  
with the rich glow of summer sunset,  
and felt the perfected art of landscape painting in poetry — what  
Ruskin styles colour instead of  
form :—

“The western waves of ebbing day  
Rolled o'er the glen their level way ;  
Each purple peak, each flinty spire,  
Was bathed in floods of living fire.”

While there, reflecting the beauty of  
sky and mountain,—

“One burnished sheet of living gold  
Loch Katrine lay beneath him rolled,  
In all her length far-winding lay,  
With promontory, creek, and bay,  
And islands that, empurpled bright,  
Floated amid the livelier light ;  
And mountains that like giants stand  
To sentinel enchanted land.  
High on the south huge Ben Venue  
Down on the lake in masses threw

Crags, knolls, and mounds, confusedly hurled,  
The fragments of an earlier world ;

While on the north, through middle air,  
Ben-an heaved high his forehead bare."

The lines are so closely associated with the scenery that the whole poem possesses a wonderful reality. I have heard Gaelic songs chanted amid the ruins of St Columba at Iona. In Fingal's Cave, the wonder of the Atlantic, I have felt that sweet responsive music, the diapason of the deep, swelling from those massive columns that rise all about one like the huge pipes of a cathedral organ. On woody Morven I have seen clouds rushing together like the misty ghosts of Ossian's heroes, and caught the wail of the bard among the bleak mountains of

Glencoe which wall in his dark-flowing Cona. I have heard "Auld Lang Syne" at the cottage birth-place of Burns, "The Campbells are Coming" on the slopes of the Lomonds; but these had not the reality of that song which comes wafted on every breeze over Ellen's Isle :—

"Soldier, rest ! thy warfare o'er !

Huntsman, rest ! thy chase is done.

Sleep ! the deer is in his den ;

Sleep ! thy hounds are by thee lying ;

Sleep ! nor dream in yonder glen

How thy gallant steed lay dying."

Cities may pass away, monuments will crumble, leaves and flowers, although sculptured in stone, will at last fall in the autumn of time ; but these hills and mountains are un-

changing records, and as long as the moonlight sleeps upon the silver waves that wash that island, and as long as the stars mirror their western march in the blue waters of Katrine, so long will there be something which speaks of Walter Scott.

And not only has Scott excelled in the description of scenery, but also in the clear appreciation of life and its motives. How many pleasing characters and familiar faces of his creation fill our everyday busy life! —Rebecca, Rowena, Die Vernon, Lady Clare, Constance, Flora Mac-Ivor, Ellen Douglas, Amy Robsart, Jeanie and Effie Deans, De Wilton, Marmion, Ivanhoe, Roderick Dhu, Jonathan Oldbuck, and Doctor Dryasdust. With what romance has

he invested the history of Rob Roy, Helen Macgregor, Richard Cœur de Lion, and James Fitz-James! Where in history will you find such portraitures of Queen Elizabeth, James I., Louis XI., and the stern Cromwell? When George IV. conferred the baronetcy on Scott, and said, "I shall always reflect with pleasure on Sir Walter Scott being the first creation of my reign," the newly-made baronet might have answered, "I, sir, have created your ancestors."

It has been said that Knox made and Scott discovered Scotland; and I think every town from Berwick to Inverness bears some testimony to the truth of the statement. But Scott has also done for England what no other writer has accom-

plished. He has made the forest of Sherwood and the grounds of Woodstock as well known as the forest of Arden, and the crumbling walls of Kenilworth as the palace of Windsor. Elihu Burritt has said, "‘Kenilworth’ is more a monument to the memory of the great novelist than to the history of Elizabeth and Leicester." Where can you find any historic ground so eloquent as the great park at Richmond, where Jeanie Deans pled the cause of her sister Effie before Queen Caroline?

You will remember that she would not save her sister's life by perjury, but after the sentence of death had been pronounced she walked five hundred miles, from Edinburgh to London, to obtain her pardon. We can have some idea of how little

travel there was in those days, when persons still living remember that the mail from London on one occasion arrived at the General Post-Office of Scotland, at Edinburgh, with only one letter in it! You remember her visit to the Duke of Argyle, her interview with the queen, and these words of simple pathos :—

“ Have pity on a poor misguided young creature, my sister—my puir sister Effie—who still lives, though her days and hours are numbered. She still lives, and a word of the king's mouth might restore her to a broken-hearted auld man, that never in his daily and nightly exercise forgot to pray that his majesty might be blessed with a long and prosperous reign; and that his throne, and the throne of his posterity, might be established in righteousness. O, madam, if ever ye kenned what it was to sorrow for and with a

sinning and a suffering creature, whose mind is sae tossed that she can be neither ca'd fit to live or die, have some compassion on our misery! Save an honest house from dishonour, and an unhappy girl, not eighteen years of age, from an early and dreadful death. Alas! it is not when we sleep soft and wake merrily ourselves that we think on other people's sufferings. Our hearts are waxed light within us then, and we are for righting our ain wrangs and fighting our ain battles. But when the hour of trouble comes to the mind or to the body—and seldom may it visit your Laddyship,—and when the hour of death comes, that comes to high and low—lang and late may it be yours,—O, my Laddy, then it isna what we hae done for oursels, but what we hae done for others, that we think on maist pleasantly."

Fiction will you call it, and then reject it? No! it is a true story. In the churchyard of Irongray, near



Dumfries, is a monument with this inscription :—

“ THIS STONE WAS ERECTED  
BY THE AUTHOR OF ‘ WAVERLEY ’  
*To the Memory of*  
HELEN WALKER,  
WHO DIED IN THE YEAR OF GOD 1791.

---

This humble individual  
Practised in real life  
The virtues  
With which fiction has invested  
The imaginary character of  
Jeanie Deans.  
Refusing the slightest departure  
From veracity,  
Even to save the life of a sister,  
She nevertheless showed her  
Kindness and fortitude  
In rescuing her from the severities of the law,  
At the expense of personal exertions  
Which the time rendered as difficult  
As the motive was laudable.

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RESPECT THE GRAVE OF POVERTY  
WHEN COMBINED WITH LOVE OF TRUTH  
AND DEAR AFFECTION.”

The simple life of this dairy-girl—call her Helen Walker or Jeanie Deans—has been raised by the genius of Scott's romance until her history becomes grander than that of Queen Caroline or Queen Elizabeth, rendered interesting by "mere dignity of mind and rectitude of principle, without any of the beauty, talent, accomplishment, or wit, to which a heroine of modern romance is supposed to have a prescriptive right."

But although few of Scott's characters are thus supported by actual existence, are they any the less true? Is the Last Judgment on the walls of the Sistine Chapel any the less real because it is not a collection of spiritual photographs or a series of magic-lantern entertainments? Is Raphael's Madonna, with her sweet, pure face

of young motherhood, any the less the world's idea of the mother of Christ because once in his rambles he found a poor peasant woman and sketched the outlines of her modest beauty on a barrel-head ?

Dante said he found in life all the materials for the description of his "Inferno." Is it not, therefore, a redeeming feature of our fallen humanity that such writers as Scott have been able to find in the same quarry materials for character polished after the similitude of a palace ? so pure and noble that in contemplating them we are enabled, for the time, to forget the wickedness which confronts us at every corner ? Yes ; these characters have a positive existence. As Macbeth and Richard the Third

have more reality in the drama than in history; as Hamlet has a more definite character than Alexander; as Don Quixote is better known than any name in Spanish record; as Rip Van Winkle still lives in the Catskills, and Wouter Van Twiller's epitaph is read only in Irving's 'Knickerbocker'; as the Rialto of Venice, where merchants once did congregate, is distinctly seen in the lines of Shakespeare; as the long wars of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines are little known except in the pages of "Romeo and Juliet"—so these creations of Scott are more real than the historical scaffolding which surrounds them. While virtue exists, the story of Rebecca is not fiction; whilst constancy endures, Ellen Douglas is not a myth.

There are women to-day with patriotism as resolute as that of Flora Mac-Ivor, who would guard their homes with the bravery of Helen Macgregor; men whose word is as inviolable as if they wore golden spurs, with a chivalry as devoted as that which flashed from the sword of Bayard, who,

“Where they feel their honour grip,  
Let that aye be their border.”

If you look for real truth, you can find it better in such ideal conceptions as these of Scott than in the too literal transcript of crime which fills the pages of police gazettes. Scandal is in some instances more true than “Paradise Lost”; but its truth is the meanness of man, while the fiction of the other approaches the Truth of God! It makes some

difference whether Truth is written with a small or a capital letter.

There are too many books flooding our literature, born in every quarter of the moon, filled with doubtful morality and false ideas of society—books which come up like the locusts of Egypt and fill our homes with darkness ; but I challenge any one to produce one sentence of Scott which teaches an immoral sentiment. When he was drawing near the close of his life, he said to one of his friends in Italy : “ I have been perhaps the most voluminous author of my day, and it is a comfort to me to think that I have tried to unsettle no man’s faith, to corrupt no man’s principles, and that I have written nothing which on my death-bed I should

wish blotted." What other writer teaches man such true loyalty to country and to fireside? and where can you find such lessons of female purity, domestic affection, and graceful womanhood? What an appeal comes down to us from his pen seventy years ago:—

"All the influence which women enjoy in society, their right to the exercise of that maternal care which forms the first and most indelible species of education, the wholesome restraint which they exercise over the passions of mankind, their power of protecting us when young and cheering us when old, depend so entirely upon their personal purity and the charm which it casts around them, that to insinuate a doubt of its real value is wilfully to remove the broadest corner-stone on which civil society rests, with all its benefits and all its comforts."

Scott's mind was pure, and he

teaches purity ; hospitable, and he teaches hospitality ; patriotic, and he teaches patriotism. How such lines as these come from his very soul—lines recited to-day by every school-boy in the remotest corner of the world :—

“ Breathes there the man with soul so dead  
Who never to himself hath said,  
‘ This is my own, my native land ’ ? ”

How the man rises above the poet when he speaks of the Douglas weeping over his daughter :—

“ Some feelings are to mortals given  
With less of earth in them than heaven ;  
And if there be a human tear  
From passion’s dross refined and clear,  
A tear so limpid and so meek  
It would not stain an angel’s cheek,  
’Tis that which pious fathers shed  
Upon a duteous daughter’s head.”

And how the daughter condenses



into one sentence the nobility of her nature :—

“ Rather will Ellen Douglas dwell  
A votaress in Maronnan's cell ;  
Rather through realms beyond the sea,  
Seeking the world's cold charity,  
Where ne'er was spoke a Scottish word,  
And ne'er the name of Douglas heard,  
An outcast pilgrim will she rove,  
Than wed the man she cannot love.”

It has been said that Scott was led to abandon poetry on account of the wonderful success of Byron. It may be, but it was enough to have founded a new school of poetry ; and then “ as Cervantes left the drama to his rival Lope de Vega to write ‘Don Quixote,’ the masterpiece of Spanish literature, so Scott turned his attention to these romances which were in truth the wonder of Europe.”

Professor Wilson said :—

“ All the world believed that Sir Walter had not only exhausted his own genius in his poetry, but that he had exhausted all the materials of Scottish life, he and Burns together. Perhaps Scott thought so too for a while. But one morning before breakfast, it occurred to him that in all his poetry he had done little or nothing, and that it would not be amiss to commence a new series of inventions. Up to his era, people had some vague, general, indistinct notion about dead people mouldering away to nothing in regular kirkyards and chance burial-places. All at once he touched their tombs with a divining-rod, and the turf streamed out ghosts—some in woodman’s dress, most in warrior’s mail, with yew bows and quivers, and giants stalked shaking spears.”

Scotland had forgotten her own history until Scott discovered it and

revealed the character of his ancestors "in the castle and the shieling, in peace and in war. How he paints the secluded valleys of the Highlands, the hardy and irregular life of the inhabitants, their love of music and of song, their wild and lofty tradition, the devotion of the clans to their chiefs, and their national enthusiasm!" With what truth he always portrays the history of those brave men, who in every age were raised up by Providence prepared to struggle for their own liberty and that divinely-chartered freedom (freedom) which says, he is a freeman whom the truth makes free. Yes; from the time of St Columba on the Isle of Iona, there have always been men in Scotland holding as it were a divine commission to carry down

to succeeding generations unadulterated Christianity. From the days of the Reformation, when Knox stood as a tower of strength, to the hour when Jenny Geddes, in the High Kirk of Edinburgh, threw the stool which shook the throne of Britain to its foundation, and from that day to the present, her soil, enriched with the blood of her bravest children, has produced a harvest of men.

In the language of Edward Everett :—

“Not to speak of the worthies of ages long passed,—of the Knoxes and the Buchanans,—and the early minstrelsy of the Border, Scotland, since she ceased to be a separate kingdom, has, through the intellect of her gifted sons, acquired a supremacy over the minds of men more extensive and more enduring than that

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of Alexander or Augustus. It would be impossible to enumerate them all : the Blairs of the last generation, the Chalmerses of this, the Robertsons and Humes, the Smiths, the Reids, the Stewarts, the Mackenzies, the Mackintoshes, the Broughams, the Jeffreys, with their distinguished compeers both in physical and moral science. The Marys and Elizabeths, the Jameses and the Charleses, will be forgotten before these names will perish from the memory of men. And when I add to them those other illustrious names—Burns, Campbell, and Scott—may I not truly say that the throne and sceptre of England will crumble into dust, like those of Scotland, and Windsor Castle and Westminster Abbey will lie in ruins as poor and desolate as those of Scone and Iona, before the lords of Scottish song will cease to reign in the hearts of men.”

There is a nationality about Scotland and all her children, even

unto the tenth and twelfth generation. They are never so old as to forget the land of the tartan, the thistle, and the heather. There is a cable beneath the surging Atlantic which, night and day, pulsates to the heart-beat of two continents; but there is a stronger bond of sympathy which time cannot corrode, which the waves can never break, reaching from every town in America far away to these hills and mountains beyond our sight, but yet within our ken; to cottages whose "Saturday nights" are known by heart the world over; to Sabbath bells where a whole people go up to worship God; to meadows where spring the gowans, the daisy snowflakes of summer; to streams which ripple in song be-

neath the rose and the woodbine;  
over which, more than any other,  
broods the genius of "Auld Lang  
Syne," and whose language, rich  
with pathos, gives the sweetest ex-  
pression of that home beyond the  
river, the "Land o' the Leal";

"There's neither grief nor care, Jean,  
The days aye are fair  
In the land o' the leal."

Clannish it may be, but it is a clan-  
ship of affection—a relationship of  
love.

On the 25th of January 1859  
the world celebrated the centen-  
nial of Robert Burns. On the 15th  
of August 1871 was celebrated  
the centennial of Walter Scott.  
Twice within these few years the  
jingling of the guinea stopped, for

a moment,—to give reverence to these names in our literature. The world has thus far celebrated few centennials in memory of individuals. If these had been merely local or national in their character, we might almost consider Scotland the egotist of nations; but these days would have been observed wherever the English language is spoken, even if Ayr and Edinburgh had allowed them to pass unnoticed. Washington Irving says, "A deeper feeling takes possession of the visitor at the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey than at the graves of kings and military glory;" and our age illustrates its truth. Lord Nelson triumphed in his death at Trafalgar, and gave new glory to the British navy; but there was




no ceremony to celebrate his centennial birthday. The Duke of Wellington came out of Waterloo — “that world’s earthquake,” — the greatest general England ever had; but he lived long enough to have his house shattered and almost sacked by a London populace.

Two years before Scott, the same month, the same day of the month — the 15th of August — was born Napoleon Bonaparte. Here were two men living side by side, achieving the greatest success — the one with the pen, the other with the sword. One lived a quiet life, found “books in running brooks, and good in everything,” even in his financial misfortune. The other convulsed a continent in his journey from an island birthplace of

the Mediterranean to an island tomb of the Atlantic. The years pass by. Napoleon's wish is at last accomplished. His ashes are removed from Saint Helena to the banks of the Seine, and placed under the gilded dome of the Invalides. Scott returns from Italy to die at Abbotsford, and is buried at Dryburgh Abbey, where the Tweed in silver sweep almost encircles his resting-place.

In that dark summer of 1870, when the streets of Paris were wild with excitement, when disasters came "not in single spies but in battalions," when the gay gardens of the Tuileries were heavy with the pall of sadness, I stood under the "Column of Napoleon" in the Place Vendôme, built by himself

from twelve hundred pieces of cannon taken from the Austrian and the Prussian; and I could but contrast it with that monument in Edinburgh, not built by Scott to commemorate his own glory, but by the generosity and love of his countrymen; and when I stood at the tomb of that great soldier, guarded by the stained flags of so many battle-fields, arranged in his fated number of nine,—and the place was indeed sacred, for it seemed as if France were being buried as that large crowd spoke in whispers and stood with uncovered heads about that marble enclosure,—I could but think how many burning cities had been laid waste, with suffering and starving populace, and all for one man's glory!



How different from this fictitious grandeur is the hallowed peace of St Mary's ruined aisle in the Abbey of Dryburgh, where the ivy clings to the crumbling arches, and where the very stars of heaven, in response to the family device, "~~Watch~~ *Watch* well," do indeed through trembling leaves watch well the grave of the poet! But the end was not yet. The middle of May 1871, the "Column of Napoleon" is hurled to the ground and destroyed by his own infuriated countrymen. The middle of August 1871, Scott's Monument is wreathed with flowers; and the moral, I believe, is that Scott did something for mankind, that he accomplished a real good for humanity, and, therefore, above all the names—

above all the men—who of his times contributed to the history of Europe, he has been chosen as the landmark of his generation.

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At Linlithgow  
Riding the Marches

*Thousands of people see Linlithgow every day from the railway-car windows; hundreds visit the ruined palace where Mary Queen of Scots was born, and linger about the Old Well with its hospitable inscription: "ST MICHAEL IS KINDE TO STRANGERS." To see the old burgh, however, in its full glory, one should witness the "Riding of the Marches," when its picturesque streets, bright with banners, welcome with historic pride this old-time custom. It has been my privilege on several occasions to experience "St Michael's kindness," and last year, at the invitation of the Provost, I had the honour of presenting the following poem at the Annual Banquet.*



ARK to the summons ! Mount  
and ride !  
Linlithgow speaks, her sons  
are here ;

From quiet Loch to flowing tide  
Her bugle-note swells loud and clear :  
Ride, brothers, ride the marches  
wide,  
With stately pomp and civic pride.

King David's royal burgh fair  
Proclaims long centuries of fame ;  
Eight hundred years her annals bear  
The record of a noble name ;  
Ride fair and free ; o'er loch and lea,  
Linlithgow's banner bears the gree.



St Michael's Church, with visioned aisle  
Where spirits pled for Scotia's weal,  
Still guards in peace a stately pile,  
Where erst stood Edward's lofty peel :  
Queen Margaret's bower and roofless  
tower  
Remain Linlithgow's richest dower.

And Scotland's Mary, cradled here,  
Whose beauty still the world o'ersways,  
Makes lake and wood and stream more  
dear,  
Her smile upon the landscape plays,—  
A sunny dream, a morning beam,  
Before the lightning's lurid gleam.

A wider boundary now belongs  
Than when your palace walls were  
reared ;  
You speak in David Lindsay's songs,  
You live by Walter Scott endeared ;  
Your marches reach where mothers  
teach  
The Doric or the English speech.

Then rally round the old Cross Well,  
Ride east and west, ride south and  
north ;  
Each year your ancient landmarks tell,  
From Lithgow to the banks of Forth :  
Your history keep, though monarchs  
sleep  
And ivy round yon turrets creep.

And here's to old St Michael's Well,  
As years their golden links unwind,  
And lisping children come to spell—  
“ ~~St Michael is to Strangers kinde.~~ ”  
Up all and ride with stately pride,  
That legend makes your marches  
wide.




**Robert Burns**


Poet-Laureate

Lodge Canongate Kilwinning

*The hailing of Robert Burns as Caledonia's Bard in St Andrew's Lodge was not recorded; the making him burgess of Linlithgow was not registered; his appointment as Poet-Laureate of Lodge Canongate Kilwinning was not minuted—but all established by conclusive and substantial proof. The last half of this Address deals with him as Poet-Laureate: his affiliation, Feb. 1, 1787; the gift of twenty guineas by the Lodge in 1815 for the Dumfries Mausoleum, because he was Poet-Laureate; the appointment of James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, in 1835, as successor of Robert Burns, Poet-Laureate; with concluding reference to living links in the chain of evidence: Henry Erskine, Dugald Stewart, Henry Mackenzie, Robert Ainslie, Nasmyth the artist, and other personal friends of the poet.*

OUR years have gone by pleasantly since I have been a resident in this fair city, and for four years I have come up with you in this room, hallowed by so many associations, to unite with friends and brethren in worship of the great poet of Scotland and the great poet of humanity—Robert Burns. Most auspiciously the Atlantic winds and the steam-power of the nineteenth century — which some say Robert Burns saw inaugurated in Scotland by Miller on Dalswinton Loch —

brought to Edinburgh this morning a beautiful portrait, reproduced from Nasmyth's painting of the peasant poet, the lad who was born in Kyle. As a member of Canongate Kil-winning, and as a citizen of that republic where the donor of the picture, Colonel Laing—"the bare-footed Canongate laddie"—has attained "gear" and reputation, I am proud to be with you, and to see another link clasped across the ocean between these two great English-speaking nations; and all because Robert Burns was born in a little cottage in Ayrshire in 1759. I come before you to-night, not with carefully prepared oration, but rather to gather inspiration from this spot, which holds in enduring framework your national poet,—from his songs,



which have gone all over the wide world,—and from that noble utterance of brotherhood, just rendered so sweetly, so powerfully, and so dramatically—

“A man’s a man for a’ that.”

Only a few days ago I saw a brother Mason in Kilmarnock, Mr David Sneddon, a true lover of Burns, an honour to masonry, and well known to the Grand Lodge of Scotland. I stood with him on the tower of that wonderful monument to Robert Burns, and he pointed out to me the relative location of Mossgiel, of Mauchline, of Tarbolton, of Ayr, and of the lovely land associated with the memory of the poet, and standing there I thought of the broader outlook which reached



wider and farther than any horizon ; for from that poetic view - point I could see New York, and San Francisco, and Calcutta ; and all because Robert Burns in 1786 published at Kilmarnock the first edition of his poems.

One week ago, the evening of the 25th of this month, I had the pleasure of sitting down with one hundred lovers of Burns in "good old Killie," and when the train came at 10.12 I found myself *en route* to Ayr, and there, with another band of loyal worshippers, put in the rest of the evening at the shrine of the great bard. I spoke to them of the reasons why Burns was loved everywhere. One of the reasons I gave that night was because Burns was Scotland in portable form. A man

could put his works in his vest-pocket, and carry Scotland with him throughout the world. Not that it was a lineal map, or a piece of accurate topography, but because sweet Afton, and the Doon, the Ayr, and the Nith had been illuminated by his genius, and men and women walked along their banks. I said also that it was because Scotsmen are everywhere, and wherever there is a Scotsman he has Robert Burns close to his heart,—and it only takes one Scotsman in a community to leaven the whole mass. I was once told in Camden, New York, that four hundred men sat down to an annual dinner on the 25th January, and not one of them was born in Scotland. It came about because, in the preceding generation, a good

old Dr Fraser from some part of Scotland settled among them, and read to them the poems of Robert Burns.

You will remember seeing here last year Mr M'Lean from Janesville, Wisconsin, who told us of swimming across the Tweed at Abbotsford when Washington Irving was a guest of Walter Scott. He said to me, on my visit to America last fall, that hundreds of men sat down annually on the 25th January in that Wisconsin town to worship the memory of Robert Burns. I am proud to-day of my countrymen, when I feel how sincerely they appreciate the truth and worth of the great poet of humanity.

Burns not only wrote for Scotsmen, but for liberty-loving men

everywhere. If ever a man loved with a true Scottish heart, it was Robert Burns; if any man ever loved with a true British heart, it was Robert Burns. But there was something in that man, as there is in every great genius, not to be confined to one spot or one nation. I remember that Henry Ward Beecher once said to a gathering of three thousand people in New York, that Robert Burns was born to the whole world. He only chanced to come by way of Scotland.

We love Burns for the universal element in his nature. He has touched every chord, sounded every emotion, and responded in his own being to every throb of humanity. He came, he lived, he suffered. In a greater degree he enjoyed life than

many of us ; in a deeper and more intense degree he suffered than any of us ever can suffer. His heart was attuned to the universal truths not only of humanity but the truths of that greater sphere which speaks of God as the Creator of honesty and of every principle of rectitude. In burning lines he has vigorously expressed how much he suffered on every occasion of his breaking the rules of life.

Burns is universally revered because he was honest, and appreciated the dignity of manhood. He felt the throbs of liberty, and was the outcome of a generation that sighed for liberty, that longed for it, until the shackles broke, and Great Britain stood free and enfranchised before the world. Now and again men

speak of Cowper as the poet that rejuvenated mankind. What was Cowper to Robert Burns? Burns, humble as he was, born in that little cottage, reared in poverty, with associates humble as himself, was the poet of humanity, the man through whom God spoke with clarion voice to people lying in darkness—the morning star of the new day, prophet of the dawn in which we are now living.

I like to think of him after the publication of that edition which startled all Scotland. I like to think of him as he went up to Kilmarnock and wanted a second edition, which the publisher was afraid to take in hand; and then as he met with Dugald Stewart, and received a letter of encouragement

and hope from Dr Blacklock. For a few years I see him living on the banks of the Doon and the Ayr; at Mount Oliphant and Lochlea; a few years longer at Mossgiel, with poverty still following him.

“ He'll hae misfortunes great and sma',  
But aye a heart aboon them a',”

rings cheerily across the field as he ploughs up the mousie and the daisy, and finds in their humbly tragic fate the great universal lot of humanity. I see him again at Mauchline and at Tarbolton, at a masonic gathering, with his immortal “farewell” sung in gatherings like this all round the world.

I next see him preparing for the West Indies, but am thankful that he never rode with broken heart the

billows of the Atlantic; for he had work to do here, and songs to sing that were to go on longer voyages. He comes to Edinburgh and finds his home with an Ayrshire man, at No. 1 Baxter's Close, Lawnmarket. It is to be noticed that Burns' homes, like his songs, were humble; but in Edinburgh he found ready associates with the great, the witty, the good, and the noble. I picture him in St Andrew's Lodge, as his health is proposed, in an unexpected toast, "Caledonia's Bard, Robert Burns." He says in a letter that he rose to his feet and replied as well as he could, and was delighted when he sat down to hear a word of praise pass along the table. I see him, about two weeks afterwards, here in Lodge Canongate Kilwinning. I



find him surrounded by the best known scholars of Edinburgh. I read the brief minute upon the books of that meeting : "The Right Worshipful Master having observed that Brother Burns was at present in the Lodge, who is well known as a great poetic writer, and for a late publication of his works, which have been universally commended, and submitted that he should be assumed a member of this Lodge, which was unanimously agreed to, and he was assumed accordingly." That minute went upon the lodge-book, and it is preserved to-day in Lodge Canon-gate Kilwinning among her choicest treasures. There is no minute in the St Andrew's lodge-books that Robert Burns ever passed the door of that Lodge, and his visit there

would have gone for ever from the memory of man if Burns had not happened to refer to it in a letter to a friend. The lodge-books of those days were very imperfectly kept. I have observed that some of the minutes of Lodge Canongate Kilwinning during these years were not even signed. In fact, the April meeting of Lodge Canongate Kilwinning in 1787 is not minuted at all. But here is that prized and honoured minute, making Burns an affiliated member of this Lodge.

There is a picture on the walls of this room representing Burns crowned as Poet-Laureate of Lodge Canongate Kilwinning. That picture hangs perhaps in every State of the Union. It hangs to-day in every shire of Scotland, produced

and reproduced in various forms and different sizes. Yet it is said by some very worthy men that this installation of Robert Burns as Poet-Laureate of Lodge Canongate Kil-winning never took place—that the event portrayed in the picture of Brother Watson, painted in 1845, had no existence. Let us look at the picture itself. Neither you, nor I, nor any other person supposes that this picture is a photograph or an exact reproduction of that scene in this Lodge. We all have seen the picture of Wellington and his staff-officers. Does any man believe for a moment that Wellington was ever surrounded by his staff-officers as shown in that picture? We all have seen the picture of Shakespeare and his friends. These pictures are

not presumed to be strictly accurate in depicting what actually took place, but for that reason are we not to believe that there was a battle of Waterloo, and that Wellington and his troops stood that day as a wall of fire around Saxon institutions and liberty, and held the line against Napoleon's cavalry? Are we to be told that Shakespeare did not live in London at the time of Ben Jonson and the worthy poets of that generation?

Let us stop for a moment and calmly consider. Friends may differ. Some may think that this ceremony never took place. We are, nevertheless, friends. If one person puts together, by the law of deduction, a certain lot of premisses, and finds a particular result in his own mind, I

am none the less a friend of that individual because I find, after the same reasoning, a logical deduction that leads me to think otherwise. Proof is to be found in tradition and in actual evidence. There is much in tradition, and many of the incidents in Burns' life are known only by tradition. What is tradition? It is when one generation passes on to another an idea or statement which is known and accepted as true.

I was once at the sweet and beautiful home of the nieces of Robert Burns, the Misses Begg. They told me that when Burns came home from working in the field he would take a half-hour and go up to a little room that had a little pine table, and upon that table

he would write the poems that he had ploughed up in the field; and the nieces told me that their mother could hardly wait till the dinner was over, and Burns back to his work, before she, his youngest sister, ran up to that room and literally devoured those poems. Am I to believe or disbelieve that? It was not written in a book, but was told me, ninety years after the production of "The Daisy" and "The Twa Dogs," by the daughter of the youngest sister of Robert Burns, and I believe it.

Long years after "The Cotter's Saturday Night" was written, Gilbert Burns said that one Sunday afternoon, while walking across the fields, his brother Robert recited to him that wonderful poem, and he spoke of the emotion that thrilled

him. When I am told of that, am I to doubt it? There is something in the Scriptures about holding fast to the old traditions and keeping secure the old landmarks.

I remember, when I was initiated in Lodge No. 7, in Hudson, New York, they told me that Brand, the half-breed Indian, had once sat in that Lodge. It was a hundred and thirty years before I was made a Mason, and it is twenty-six years since this fact which I am going to tell you was made known to me. It was never on record. It was told me that once in a massacre, when a man was tied to a tree and the fagots piled about him, and the flames were beginning to mount and crackle, that man, thinking no one was present—nothing but the all-

seeing eye of God—remembered the hailing sign of distress. In that vast wilderness, he made the sign. Brand, the half-breed Indian, who had been made a Mason in Canada, rushed into the flames and cut his prisoner free, because he was a brother Mason. Am I to believe that tradition? When my sons join that Lodge, will I not tell it to them? Years may pass before I take them by the hand as brother Masons; but the first thing I will tell them will be that Brand once sat there. And when speaking of my connection with Lodge Canongate Kilwinning, I will tell them that the great poet Robert Burns sat in this Lodge, and was made her Poet-Laureate; that I received it from brethren who voiced the fact from those who knew



him, and within these walls took him by the hand.

I remember the time when I received honorary affiliation here, four years ago. It was a proud hour of my life to come up to this Lodge, with its old associations, and the first thing told me was that there, in that Poet's Corner, Robert Burns was made Poet-Laureate.

But tradition is not all. We are living only in the second or third generation from that day. There are men still living who took the hands of those who knew Robert Burns. I do not care whether it is the second or third generation; tradition in a great family is bound to be true. Half of the history of the noble families of Scotland is to-day unwritten; but the trans-

mitted tradition of those families is truer than much of the history that has been put upon paper. A man in a quiet chamber, with curtains drawn, may make characters that resemble the poet's writing, and may pile up documents by the "cord," which experts declare to be spurious. Tradition may exaggerate; but always in the very core of tradition there is the nugget of truth.

I speak to some who have only recently joined this Lodge, and desire to speak plainly and freely, that they may not be disturbed by floating sentences that come from outside sources, but examine for themselves straightforward evidence and the vouchers we have of Burns as Poet-Laureate of this Lodge. We do not rest our claims upon tradi-

tion alone. We have vouchers of the fact, and vouchers that would be accepted as evidence in any court of law in the world. There is such a thing as written testimony that cannot be disputed.

I wish to say to the younger members of the Lodge that although in 1787 there was nothing put in that brief minute about Robert Burns having been made Poet-Laureate of this Lodge, yet twenty-eight years afterwards, while many men who knew of the event were still living, —I do not stop to account for it, whether it was due to the meagreness or the slovenliness of the minutes, —but twenty-eight years afterwards—only eighteen and a half years after the poet's death—when everybody had Burns blazed upon

him as the genius of Scotland, in the year 1815, when it was proposed that a mausoleum should be erected over the poet's grave in Dumfries, this grand old Lodge put upon record that it would give twenty guineas towards that mausoleum, *because Burns was the Poet-Laureate of Canongate Kilwinning.* And, as if to make the link secure, the brother who seconded that motion in committee was Mr Charles Moore, the very man who signed the minute as Depute-Master of Burns' affiliation in this Lodge in 1787, and, therefore, was bound to know whether he had been made Poet-Laureate or not.

Am I to be told that this Lodge, with its Christopher North, and its members known throughout the

world, would try to make out that Robert Burns was Poet-Laureate of this Lodge if he were not? If you do not know Scotsmen, I do, and when they subscribe they are pretty sure to know what they are subscribing to.

Take a parallel instance. There was another doubter, a person by the name of Ignatius Donelly, who made a trip to Stratford-on-Avon. He went fortified with a book of 960 pages under his arm to prove to the good people of Stratford that Shakespeare was not a poet at all,—that Lord Bacon had written the plays of Shakespeare. There is not a book so thick or a volume so thin that can take the place in this Lodge of the immortal memory of Robert Burns as our Poet-Laureate.

What other witnesses have we? I summon Henry Mackenzie—to whom Walter Scott dedicated his 'Waverley'—the author of 'The Man of Feeling,' who died in 1831, who wrote the first warm-hearted expression of regard for Burns, and placed the first literary crown on his head. I summon Henry Erskine, the great wit of Scotland, who was a member of this Lodge, who lived until 1817 and knew Robert Burns, and ask if he would not know in 1815 whether Burns had been Poet-Laureate here? I summon Alexander Nasmyth, the celebrated painter and friend of Burns, who lived until 1831; Baron Norton,—made a brother the very night, February 1, 1787, when Burns was affiliated,—who lived until 1820;

William Petrie, who knew the poet in 1787, and lived until 1845, thus connecting the year Burns was made Poet-Laureate with the very year the picture was produced; Robert Ainslie, who made the tour of the Borders with Burns, and lived until 1838, thereby connecting the Poet of Ayr with the Ettrick Shepherd, who was made Poet-Laureate in 1835; Louis Cauvin, the great teacher, with whom Burns studied French in Edinburgh, who was made a Mason in 1778, and lived until 1825. I summon Lord Kenmore, who spans the years between Burns and Hogg, who was made a Mason in 1786, and lived until 1840. Will any one say that these men—all brethren of Lodge Canongate Kil-winning—would not know in 1815

whether Burns was Poet-Laureate here? and does any man think that these men, whose very names suggest that old - time honour of Edmund Burke, which "felt a stain like a wound," would have fabricated and perpetuated a falsehood? Is it not more probable that these men, who saw with their own eyes, should know whether Burns was Poet-Laureate here, or self - appointed critics of second sight, living one hundred years after the poet's death?

There was a man by the name of Campbell, who forms a connecting-link between Robert Burns and this picture, the man who seconded the motion in 1845 to have this picture painted. This man says that some of his happiest days were spent with Burns at Ochertyre Castle. It has



been pointed out that he would only have been eleven years of age at that time. I have not examined the record, and cannot say ; but this I will say, that if any boy eleven years of age had met Burns, and did not remember it to tell to his friends and descendants, he had better never have been born.

I will take a leaf out of my own book. I met Horace Greeley, the great editor of a New York paper, when a lad. I followed him for two days, willing to touch even the hem of his garment, and to shake his hand. When I was ten years of age, there came a man to our town to give a series of poetic lectures—John G. Saxe. I remember the very seat in the village church where I sat those nights. When I

was ten years of age, I met John B. Gough. When eleven years old, I was fishing with a crooked pin in a little stream near Troy, New York. A man passed by, of stately mien, and talked with me, afterwards President Garfield of the United States. These are things a boy can never forget. So much for reminiscence; and we can readily see how Brother Campbell cherished the memory.

On January 16, 1835, another minute appears in the books of this Lodge, to the effect that "It was expedient that the Honorary Office of Poet - Laureate of the Lodge, which had been in abeyance since the death of the immortal Brother Robert Burns, should be revived, and that James Hogg, the Ettrick

Shepherd, on whom his poetical mantle had fallen, should be respectfully requested to accept the appointment as the highest tribute to his genius and worth which the brethren have it in their power to bestow, which motion was unanimously and enthusiastically carried." This is another connecting - link between Burns and this Lodge.

There has been no man connected with this Lodge since the time of Burns who did not believe that Burns was Poet-Laureate here. It all comes to this, the credibility of the witnesses.

I am honoured with the friendship and affiliation of Lodge No. 1, Mary's Chapel. The Master of that Lodge, whom I am glad to see here to-night, has given me, as

a keepsake, which I shall ever cherish, a mell or mallet made of wood taken from the old Parliament Hall at Edinburgh Castle, and another bit of wood taken from Holyrood Chapel. While I live and my children live they will know that these are not fabrications, because they come to me direct from an honest man with an honest heart. He has also presented to me a little bit of wood from the bed which witnessed the last sigh of Robert Burns. I shall cherish that as long as I live, and nobody can tell me, or my children, or my children's children, that that piece of wood was not part of the bed whereon Robert Burns died.

It depends, my brothers, on the credibility of witnesses, and I know of no men more worthy of credence

than those who used to come here in the days of Erskine, and others associated with Burns in this Lodge. What a galaxy of genius! How they pass in long review before us! How the old Hall grows wider and the tessellated floor dearer as it rings again to their cheery companionship! No wonder that old Canongate Kilwinning with hallowed associations cherishes her great Laureate's birthday, and exclaims—

“ Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,  
And fondly broods with miser care.  
Time but the impression stronger makes,  
As streams their channels deeper wear.”

**With Hearty Grasp**

*Lines on the occasion of presenting a facsimile  
of the DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE to Lodge  
Canongate Kilwinning, Edinburgh.*



NCE more within these hal-  
lowed walls  
We celebrate our Laureate  
dear,

Whose genius all the world enthralls,  
Whose love awakens festal cheer:  
For here the peasant ploughman stood,  
With daisies from the banks of Ayr  
To make this spot a Holy Rood,—  
An altar for each brother's prayer.

But what shall one from o'er the sea  
With honour bring as offering meet;  
What voice or word from them to thee  
Which every heart will fondly greet:



What theme shall young Columbia bear  
To swell the chorus of your song?  
Well, "*Here's a hand, my trusty fier,*"  
With words that to the tune belong.

Words born of Magna Charta brave,  
Along the banks of Runnymede :  
At Bannockburn, where freemen gave  
A bonnie cast to freedom's seed ;  
Conceived at far-off Marathon,  
At Salamis, Thermopylæ ;  
Crowned in the heart of Washington,  
The noblest product of the free.

Words that inspired the grandest strain  
Which ever thrilled the onward van,  
Soul-stirring notes in symbols plain,  
Life's lofty creed,—"*A man's a man ;*"  
Ay, Robbie Burns, that song of thine  
Narrows the seas and girds the world,  
And makes these walls a sacred shrine,  
Where faith and love shall be unfurled.

So take the page your children wrote,  
    A common pride is yours and theirs,  
Parents their children fondly quote,  
    And weel-bred bairns their ain fore-  
        bears ;  
Love's cable-tow for evermore  
    Binds gallant sire and sturdy son  
With hearty grasp from shore to shore,  
    For ROBERT BURNS and WASHING-  
        TON.

He saw in man's uplifted face  
The promise of a grander time;  
He sang the freedom of the race,  
He boldly rang the century's chime.  
—*In Clover and Heather.*



**The Influence of  
Robert Burns  
on  
American Literature**


*The following paper was written for the first  
number of 'The Burns Chronicle,' by request of  
the Editor.*



HERE are many sides to the subject which has been suggested as an acceptable topic for consideration in the first number of 'The Burns Chronicle.' Only a few phases can be glanced at in the limits assigned. The influence of any great writer may be seen—first, in the form of literary expression, or what is generally known as style; second, in the more vital and permanent power of the truth presented. The influence of the first is generally more immediate; and, like fashion-

plates, more readily observed. The style of Johnson and Pope, of Carlyle and Macaulay, can be easily traced among their respective followers, admirers, and disciples, on both sides of the Atlantic. The outward form of each writer lives its little day, to give way in turn to newer forms of expression. It becomes difficult therefore to estimate by deduction the exact power or force of any writer in imposing his own distinctive style on a living and ever-developing literature.

It is also difficult to deal scientifically and philosophically by the adoption of the inductive method, for the field is too wide to gather up facts, not subject to contradiction or criticism, and it is manifestly impossible to put one's finger upon any



form of literature and say that its manifold threads are from any one loom.

Laying aside the didactic pentameter which has had its day, it might, however, be premised that since the days of Chaucer and Spenser, two schools of poetry have been struggling for mastery. On the one hand, we have the honest Ballad and Lyric, direct and incisive; on the other the euphuistic and mystical, word-woven and complicated; the first more especially Saxon, Gaelic, and Scandinavian in origin, dealing with things; the second deriving its power largely from French, German, and Italian sources. Perhaps in the direct line of succession from Spenser, Keats might be taken as the best expression of the latter school; Burns,



drawing his inspiration from the old-fashioned Ballad and Lyric, might be regarded as the best embodiment of the natural school.

It is right here where the power of Burns is especially manifest in the development of American literature. The æsthetic element of Keats appealing forcibly to the sense, and the graceful lines of his disciples, especially acceptable to some of our best artistic magazines, and perfect to the canon of art, swoon and die in languid delight; while Burns, and what we might call the school of everyday poets, looking less to the form than the matter, find higher satisfaction for themselves and the general public in natural and song-like rhythm, equally adapted for narration or the deepest passion.

It abides in our memory by its consonance and melody, becomes a part of our being, while the artificial and the borrowed pass away to be forgotten. We recall with delight the early ballads of Browning. They have the true ring, and are as honest as "John Gilpin"; but the best lovers of the later Browning are compelled to sit with book in hand and scan with care when they are lost in the sublime æsthetics of his mysticism and introversions. Coleridge, Tennyson, and Wordsworth, the greatest of later English poets, never forget, even in their highest philosophy, the refrain and melodious recurrence of natural song. At least where this element is retained they speak with power, where it is omitted they write with abated vigour.

Take a simple test. Read to any child of ten or twelve years, or any class of pupils from ten to twenty years of age, or to grown-up people, a poem from Percy's 'Reliques' every day for a week, and for the same space an equal number of lines from the school of Keats and Browning, and it will be found that the old-fashioned lines of "Chevy Chase" and "Robin Hood" and the "Nut-Browne Mayd" will be retained in memory, while the other has passed away with the reading. Burns, Coleridge, Tennyson, and Wordsworth become therefore the leaders of natural verse which abides readily in the memory, and their influence is distinctly traceable in the growth of American literature. In the directness and sweetness of Long-

fellow, of Whittier, of Holmes, of Bryant, and Lowell—the five poets, *par excellence*, of America—we note that the natural school of verse has triumphed over the mystic, the foreign, and the supra-artistic.


This being so, it is a notable fact that Longfellow, Whittier, Lowell, and Holmes have all testified to their admiration and affection for the Scottish Poet. Each acknowledges for himself the mastership of Burns. His influence is traceable in their lines. Through their souls streams the bright flame of his wide charity and brotherhood. The form of the Ballad and Lyric are secure, and the more secure for his leadership, as against the school of mysticism and inversion.

Burns has been listened to eagerly

in America because, perhaps, more than any other British writer, he seemed to understand the spirit of her institutions. He knew intuitively that American liberty was born and reared at Christian firesides. Early New England had much in common with the Scottish mode of thinking and aspiration. "The Cotter's Saturday Night" and Whittier's "Snow-Bound" show close relation in thought and feeling.


Burns saw that the American Republic, in its noblest conception, was the highest expression of the great truths of Christ's Gospel. Not a Utopia, not unrestrained licence, but a realisation of the lofty utterance that "he is a freeman whom the truth makes free." As a Scottish peasant Burns saw this. His clay-

built shieling, and the studious household which it sheltered, would not have been lonesome among the hills of New England. His sympathy was with freedom everywhere. "So may God defend the cause of truth and liberty as he did that day," was the noble sentence affixed to his immortal song of Bannockburn. There was nothing insular in his devotion. His lines to Washington, and "A man's a man for a' that," were caught up by a nation of toilers, subduing with sturdy arms and stout hearts the great forests and virgin soil of productive valleys. He helped the land to appreciate its own manhood. He proclaimed, as it had never been proclaimed before, the carl-hemp of personal independence, and taught us that the



hadden-grey element of Scottish and Saxon literature was worth more than the euphuisms and Lillyisms of sickly refinement.

His songs, moreover, of love and hope filled a great want in our literary life. Simplicity and sincerity went hand in hand through all his utterances with a just and true reverence. His influence went also deeper than mere literary or social questions. He moulded the religious thought of the people. As in Scotland, so in America, this was the great mission of Burns, which can only be briefly referred to in the compass of this article. When Henry Ward Beecher gave his powerful address in New York at the Centenary of Burns, the Christian world was ready for the sentiment



that the great orator so eloquently espoused. There are people here and there who cannot separate the life of a man from his teaching,—who forget that only one, throughout the world's history, came free from human infirmities. Such critics do not willingly see the great work of Burns in laying bare cant and hypocrisy, in disposing of pagan ideas, which are of no credit to a Christian civilisation; in showing that there is an eternal good and an eternal evil; that goodness is altogether lovely, and vice and wickedness altogether hideous. Here is the great power of Burns in America, and after Mr Beecher finished his address, the critic looked dejected, and has not dared to show "his phiz 'mong better folks." He



was relegated to his proper sphere, "close under hatches." The world then saw in its fulness that Burns was a living preacher to the best teachers of living thought.

As the great and good poet Whittier once wrote to me: "I have never heard him estimated too highly as a poet, and I do not see how he can be." I once heard Dr M'Cosh tell a knot of preachers that, as a teacher of Christian truth, Burns was greater than either Milton or Wordsworth; more than that, said the learned doctor, the man who wrote "A man's a man for a' that" within six months of his death, and kept the excise-books of his district without blot or mistake, was not very far gone as a man either. In honesty, simplicity, and vigour, Burns

has exerted great influence on American thought and literary expression. Its best acknowledgment will be the awakening of thought and criticism in this direction.

The land of heath and shaggy wood  
To him was bathed in roseate light ;  
He knew each spot where heroes stood,  
And dared to battle for the right ;  
True heroes of the olden time  
Whose names still ring in freedom's chime,  
And make e'en strangers fondly turn  
Unto the field of Bannockburn.

—*In Clover and Heather*, 1890.

# At Bannockburn

*"So may God defend the cause of truth and  
liberty as he did that day."*

—ROBERT BURNS.

*This volume of addresses and poems, with loving links of personal reminiscence, hearty handshakes, and cordial "cups o' kindness," dedicated to lovers of Scotland everywhere, closes with a cheery Fourth of July celebration at Bannockburn. The cloth was spread for an out-of-door picnic of sixty friends from different parts of Scotland and the United States. "The Star-spangled Banner" rang out with "Scots, wha hae," and the day was fittingly concluded, as the entire company, with "Here's a Hand," stood in a circle around the old Bore-stone, and sang "Auld Lang Syne."*



Y, everywhere all round the  
world  
May God defend as on this  
field

The flag of Liberty unfurled,  
The Truth by blood of martyrs sealed;  
Burns' prayer is ours : God bless the  
cause  
When freemen stand for freedom's  
laws.

God bless the cause as on that day!  
Swell wide the song, each note is dear;  
Five centuries have passed away,  
The dawning of the sixth is near;  
From every land your sons return  
To press the field of Bannockburn.

To greet the storied standard here  
In sacred light of early morn :—  
God bless the land ; each rood is dear  
Where Scottish liberty was born ;—  
A battle for the world beside,  
A victory for the nations wide.

A link to bind the old and new,  
To make more close the kindred tie,  
To span with light the ocean blue,  
To float in song 'neath sunnier sky ;—  
The note that swells in " Scots, wha  
hae "  
All round the world has come to  
stay.

At Marathon and Runnymede,  
By Stirling Bridge, at Naseby Field,  
Fair freedom conned a lofty creed  
And wrote *Impune* on her shield ;  
Then westward brushed the morning  
dew  
And set the stars within the blue.

No dreamers in Utopia they,—  
Brave Pilgrims housed in narrow hold ;  
Fate took the helm, a wintry bay  
Stern welcome gave that starving fold ;  
What seeds of time the Mayflower  
bore  
From Albion to Columbia's shore.

To gentler vales, to brighter streams,  
To prairies carpeted with flowers ;  
To mountains ribbed with golden seams,  
To quiet haunts and woodland  
bowers ;—  
The poet's "Island of the Blest,"  
The fair Republic of the West.

So here beside the flowing rill  
We come with joy to trace the source,  
To note the fount, to feel the thrill  
Of manhood in its widening course,  
And standing round the old Bore-  
stone,  
Pledge Wallace, Bruce, and Washing-  
ton.



Dear Scotia ! Homestead of the past,  
Enshrined through all the fleeting  
years ;  
Your ivy-tendrils bind us fast ;  
A common heritage endears ;  
May God defend ! Burns' prayer is  
ours,  
Engird the world with Freedom's  
flowers.

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